



2nd ELLRA CONFERENCE

Exploring Multilingualism and Diversity in
Formal Early Language Learning Contexts

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Bellaterra, Spain

3-5 June 2026

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Welcome from the 2nd ELLRA Conference Chair



It is an absolute pleasure to welcome you all to the 2nd Biannual ELLRA Conference, hosted by Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. On behalf of the Organizing Committee, I am delighted to present this Book of Abstracts, which showcases the cutting-edge research and ongoing discussions on early language learning that will define the ELLRA conference these coming days.

This conference brings together a diverse community of leading researchers, scholars, and practitioners in the field of early language learning and teaching and reflects the ELLRA community's commitment to the study of multilingualism and diversity in early language learning contexts. Embracing and exploring such diversity through multilingual educational practices in formal early language learning contexts provides a crucial insight into how children learn and engage with languages in diverse and dynamic classrooms and identifies instructional practices which render language education much more equitable and inclusive from an early age.

The abstracts compiled in these pages represent the foundation of our program including ongoing research, key findings, rigorous methodologies, innovative proposals and compelling ideas and insights from all over the world. They include 4 keynote presentations, 1 trajectory panel, 78 oral presentations, 3 themed symposia, 12 posters and 6 PhD Workshop presentations representing more than 80 universities in 24 countries worldwide (Algeria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom). We hope that this book serves not only as a guide during the event but also as a valuable reference and catalyst for your future academic and professional endeavors.

I would like to express my gratitude to the ELLRA Chair, Sandie Mourão, and the ELLRA Executive Committee for giving the UAB and more specifically, the Departament de Filologia Anglesa i de Germanística and the GReLA Research group the chance to organize the 2nd ELLRA Biannual Conference and for giving us their continued and generous support during the organization process and during the conference. I would also like to thank the UAB, Congressos i Esdeveniments UAB Campus, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and most importantly the UISAD for their institutional support and logistical coordination. A few sponsors (John Benjamins, Multilingual Matters, MDPI) have also contributed to making the conference possible. Thanks are also due to the scientific and review committee for ensuring a rigorous and fair assessment of proposals and hence contributing to an outstanding program. My sincere thanks are also extended to the local committee for their invaluable efforts in taking care of organizational matters including the conference email, website design and updating, assembling the program and this Book of Abstracts, participant registration, conference packs, meals, cultural activities and volunteer recruitment. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and enthusiasm of our student volunteer team, who have kindly offered their free time to contribute to the success of the conference and its participants' well-being. Most importantly, I would like to sincerely thank the keynote and plenary speakers for generously sharing

their expertise and critical insights with the ELLRA community and inspiring both the young and consolidated researchers in the field. Last but not least, we should acknowledge the conference delegates and participants, whose engagement, commitment and valuable contributions are what truly brings this event to life.

I hope the conference will be a fruitful experience for scholars in linguistics, applied linguistics, education, language didactics, pedagogy and psychology conducting research on early foreign, second, minority, additional or heritage language learning contexts worldwide.

I invite you to immerse yourselves in the intellectual journey ahead, engage actively with the presenters, and forge new collaborative relationships.

Welcome to the conference, and I wish you a highly productive and inspiring event!

Elisabet Pladevall-Ballester
ELLRA 2026 Conference Chair

Welcome from the ELLRA Chair

The 2nd ELLRA Biennial Conference marks an important moment in the continuing development of ELLRA – the Early Language Learning Research Association. Since its formal establishment in 2023, ELLRA has grown into a vibrant international community dedicated to supporting scholarly cooperation in early language learning research worldwide. The conference in Barcelona brings together researchers, teacher educators, doctoral scholars, and practitioners from diverse international contexts to share research, engage in dialogue, and strengthen collaborative networks.



Hosted by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona from 3–5 June 2026, the conference reflects the breadth, vitality, and interdisciplinarity of contemporary early language learning research. The programme showcases contributions addressing multilingualism, classroom practice, teacher education, intercultural learning, assessment, digital learning environments, children's literature, inclusion, and research methodologies involving young learners. Together, these contributions demonstrate the dynamic and evolving nature of the field and the growing importance of research-informed exchange across educational and linguistic contexts.

The conference theme and programme speak directly to ELLRA's commitment to fostering inquiry, innovation, and inspiration in early language learning research. At a time when educational contexts are increasingly shaped by linguistic diversity, technological change, mobility, and evolving understandings of childhood and learning, opportunities for international dialogue and collaboration are more important than ever.

This 2nd ELLRA Biennial Conference also reflects the continued growth of ELLRA as an international association. In the past couple of months, membership has expanded to over 200 members representing 35 countries worldwide, demonstrating increasing engagement with the Association's activities and initiatives. These include the webinar series 'By Members, For Members', the WebFestivals, the Virtual School for Doctoral Scholars and Early Career Researchers, and the ELLRA Solidarity Grant to support colleagues in challenging financial circumstances.

The organisation of the 2nd ELLRA Conference has been made possible through the commitment, generosity, and collaboration of many colleagues. On behalf of ELLRA, I would like to extend sincere thanks to Elisabet Pladevall Ballester and the conference organising team at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona for their dedication, professionalism, and careful preparation of this event. I would also like to thank the Scientific Committee, reviewers, keynote speakers, presenters, volunteers, and all participants for their contributions to the conference and to the wider ELLRA community.

I hope that the 2nd ELLRA Biennial Conference provides opportunities not only for the dissemination of research, but also for meaningful discussion, new partnerships, and reflection on future directions in early language learning research.

Sandie Mourão
Chair, ELLRA Executive Committee

The Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona welcomes you to its campus!

The UAB was founded in 1968 as an unprecedented project in our country: the first campus university, where all the faculties, research centers, libraries, cultural spaces, green areas, and student services were to be integrated into a lively academic environment. The main campus, where you are right now, is located in Bellaterra, in a natural setting of 230 hectares, just 25 km from Barcelona. Plaça Cívica is one of the main meeting points of the campus, where students and visitors can find various shops and cafes. Another prominent feature of the campus is the Bellaterra Columns, created by sculptor Andreu Alfaro and inaugurated in 1999.

The UAB is a public and international university, recognized for its quality of education and research. It has 15 faculties and schools, offers more than 100 bachelor's degree programmes and over 140 master's degree programmes. It hosts thousands of undergraduate, master's and PhD students each year in its 57 departments and 179 research groups.

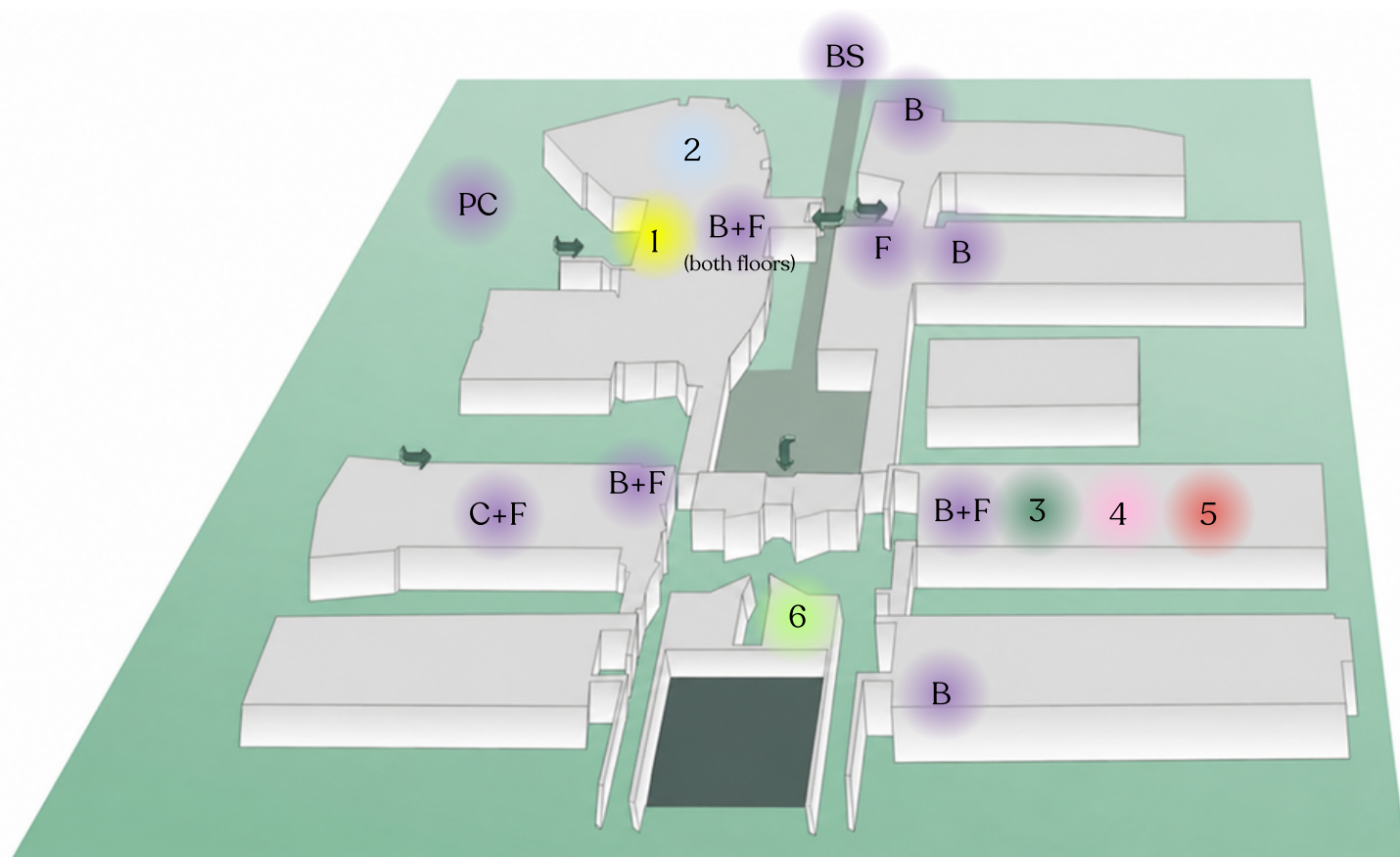
The UAB is a prestigious university, recognized in major global rankings for its teaching, research impact, internationalization and sustainability. In the QS World University Rankings 2026, the UAB is ranked 172nd in the world and second in Spain. It also features in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2026 as the second Spanish university.

The UAB is a place of academic success, inspiring community and welcoming environment. We hope that your time on campus will allow you to experience its green surroundings and its strong commitment to knowledge and society.

Welcome to the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona!



Venue map



Points of interest

1 Auditori

2 Sala de revistes

3 Rooms 200 (ground floor)

4 Seminari A (first floor)

5 Sala d'actes (first floor)

6 Sala de graus

B Bathrooms

F Fountains

BS Bus stop

PC Plaça del coneixement

C Cafeteria

Organizing Committee

Elisabet Pladevall Ballester

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Elisabet researches foreign language learning and teaching among young learners and adolescents in EFL and CLIL contexts as well as adults in EMI contexts. She is particularly interested in the effect of peer interaction, explicit instruction and individual differences on the learners' linguistic and affective development.

Jennifer Ament

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Jennifer researches the effects of learning context on pragmatic development as well as the relationship between individual differences and learning outcomes in English-medium instruction contexts.

Montserrat Capdevila

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Montse researches how students—both young learners and children—learn English as a foreign language in multilingual contexts, focusing on grammar, sentence structure, and especially on how peer interaction and classroom methods influence language acquisition.

Anna Marsol

Universitat de Lleida

Anna's main research interests revolve around foreign language learning and classroom interaction in EFL and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) settings, child peer interaction and teacher education. She has also worked as a secondary education EFL teacher.

Sònia Mas-Alcolea

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Sònia's research adopts a critical discourse-analytic approach and focuses on the internationalisation of higher education at home and abroad, particularly in relation to study abroad, identity, second language acquisition, cross-cultural communication, and interculturality.

Ingrid Mora-Plaza

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Ingrid's research explores the learning and teaching of second language pronunciation and oral communication skills, with a particular focus on affective and cognitive individual differences in speech learning and task-based language teaching.

Jordi Rodó Tomás

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Jordi is a PhD candidate who studies the relationship between foreign language learning and cognitive abilities in bilingual students. He also studies oral proficiency development in young learners and the cognitive processing of gender in bilinguals.

Marta Segura

Universitat de Barcelona

Marta researches early foreign language learning, focusing on CLIL and multilingualism in pre-primary and primary education. Her research examines the effects of instructional approach, individual differences and Extramural English on children's development of lexical abilities and language skills.

Adriana Soto Corominas

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Adriana researches multilingual development in childhood and adolescence from a quantitative perspective. She is especially interested in the effects of quality and quantity of exposure in children who acquire multiple languages in the home, both as social and heritage languages.

Laura Styles

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Laura researches technology-mediated language learning and instruction, with a focus on grammar acquisition, the use of AI in language instruction, and spoken interaction in CALL settings.

Alexandra Vraciu

Universitat de Lleida

Alexandra's research focuses on the potential of peer interaction for foreign language learning and teaching, the affordances of English-medium instruction at university and language teacher education. She coordinates the double degree in Pre-Primary and Primary Education at the Universitat de Lleida.

Other members of the organizing committee

Sandie Mourão
Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Joanna Rokita Jaśkow
UP Krakow

Nils Jäkel
Universität Hildesheim

Reviewers

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	Raúl Azpilicueta Universidad Pública de Navarra	

Conference Programme

June 3rd Programme

9:30	Pre-doctoral Workshop opening				
10:00	Workshop Session 1 SALA DE GRAUS				
11:30	COFFEE BREAK				
12:00	Workshop Session 2 SALA DE GRAUS				
13:30	LUNCH (for Pre-doctoral Workshop participants)				
15:00	CONFERENCE OPENING - AUDITORI				
15:30	Keynote 1: Prof. María del Pilar García Mayo - AUDITORI				
16:30	Parallel session 1 - Facultat de Lletres				
	Session 1.1 Extramural learning and Parents SALA DE GRAUS	Session 1.2 Plurilingual education SALA D'ACTES	Session 1.3 Teacher education ROOM 201	Session 1.4 Language development ROOM 202	Session 1.5 Individual differences ROOM 203
16:30	Mirna Erk - Young EFL learners' perceptions of importance of extramural English activities and their EFL achievement	Nayr Ibrahim, Anastasia Gaintartzi - Exploring plurilingualism through Dominant Language Constellations in schools: building teacher-student affective and sensorial connections	Francesca Costa, Noelia Galán-Rodríguez - CLIL in Pre-service Teacher Training: Analyzing Syllabi for English Courses in Italian Primary Education Degrees	Heike Mlakar, Jingyuan Zhuang - Exploring Cognitive and Literacy Factors in EFL Vocabulary Growth: Evidence from German Primary Schools and Literacy Instruction Types	Eline Decraene, Maribel Montero Perez, Hilde Van Keer - Negotiating language boundaries: Young multilingual children's voice on language use, motivation, and well-being in school
17:00	Juliana Reichert Assunção Tonelli et al. - Designing Local Pathways: Collaborative Frameworks for Teaching English to (Very) Young Learners in Brazil	Serdar Tekin - Translanguaging with young English learners in the Turkish primary school context: A proposal of comprehensive framework	Joanna Głogowska, Katarzyna Brzosko-Barratt - Exploring the Development of Preservice Primary Language Teacher Identity in Transnational Teacher Education	Pronina Mariia, Maria del Mar Vanrell, Iban Mañas - Narrative development of heritage Russian multilingual children in Catalan-speaking territories of Spain	Melita Lemut Bajec, Manca Jež - Language Anxiety in Learning English as a Foreign Language among Slovenian Third-Grade Pupils
17:30	Zeynep Çamlıbel-Acar - Parental involvement and home support in children's EFL education	Anna Paris - Learning by Doing and Learning by Teaching: Toward an Integrated Model for Early Bi/Multilingual Education	Anna Sarbiewska - Developing Pre-service Teachers' Understanding of Pedagogical Translanguaging in Early Language Education: A Design-based Study		Marta Kopinska, Maria Orcasitas-Vicandi - The effect of L1 pre-task planning on young EFL learners' willingness to communicate in L2 during collaborative writing

June 3rd Programme (cont'd)

18:00	COFFEE BREAK				
18:30	Parallel session 2 - Facultat de Lletres				
	Session 2.1 Extramural learning and Parents SALA DE GRAUS	Session 2.2 Plurilingual education SALA D'ACTES	Session 2.3 Teacher education ROOM 201	Session 2.4 Individual differences ROOM 202	
18:30	Gözde Şahin, Şebnem Yalçın - Immersed in English beyond the classroom: An exploratory study of Turkish EFL learners	Benz Inga, Kristin Kersten - Developing regulatory abilities through language learning: Majority and heritage language competencies predict emotion regulation and flexible goal adjustment in young learners	Cecilie Waallann Brown, Milica Savic - Critical visual literacy in L2 English teacher education: Opportunities and challenges of the Redesign task	Oxana Plugina, Camino Bueno- Alastuey, Isabel García-del-Real - Foreign Language Acquisition in Dyslexic Pupils: Reading and Listening Skills in Bilingual Primary Education	
19:00		Jana Folch- Claramunt, Joel Espejo-Álvarez, Júlia Florit-Pons, Mireia Gómez i Martínez, Ingrid Vilà-Giménez, Pilar Prieto - Benefits of co-creating a language intervention: assessing the acceptability, feasibility, appropriateness and perceived measures of learning of the MultiModal Narrative Newcomer intervention	Joohwan Yang - Exploring Language Teacher Identities in Linguistically and Institutionally Biased Contexts: A Case Study of Local Primary English Teachers in South Korean State Schools	Mariia Pronina, Sergey Knyazev, Maria del Mar Vanrell - Individual differences in the acquisition of intonation in heritage multilingual children	
19:30	Welcome reception and cultural activity - PLAÇA DEL CONEIXEMENT - UAB				

June 4th Programme

8:30	Registration Desk				
9:00	Keynote 2: Dr Sabine Little - AUDITORI				
10:00	Parallel session 3 - Facultat de Lletres				
	Session 3.1 Extramural learning & Parents SALA DE GRAUS	Session 3.2 CLIL SALA D'ACTES	Session 3.3 Plurilingual education SEMINARI A	Session 3.4 Language development ROOM 207	Themed Symposium ROOM 213
10:00	Dominika Chrobak, Katarzyna Nosidlak - Multilingualism at the School Gate: Parental Knowledge and Attitudes Toward Language Diversity in Early Primary Education in Poland	Marina González de San Pedro Jiménez - The influence of pedagogical translanguaging on CLIL young multilingual learners' productive vocabulary: Insights from lexical transfer	Anja Steinlen, Thorsten Piske - Long-lasting effects of early bilingual programs? Minority and majority language students' transition from primary school CLIL programs to regular foreign language lessons in secondary schools in Germany	Inga Benz, Ramona Böttcher, Nils Jäkel, Rhythm Chauhan, Lynn Jedamski, Julius Kleinbub, Dorothee Kohl- Dietrich, Helena Mengeu, Katharina Ponto, Jana Roos, Friederike Schirmag, Kristin Kersten - Does learners' degree of bilingualism and working memory predict L2 grammar and lexicon	Kirsten Birsak de Jersey, Harriet Jeeves, Shona Whyte, Ciara R. Wigham, Euline Cutrim Schmid, Mateja Dagarin Fojkar, Katarzyna Brzosko-Barratt, Paulina Marchik, Tina Rozmanič, Florentina Nicolás- Conesa, Yvette Coyle, Pedro Férrez Mora, Encarna Carrillo - Implementing virtual exchange in the early language learning classroom
10:30	Stefanie Frisch, Julia Reckermann - The role of family language background in learners' opinions towards the appropriate time to start English language teaching	Irene Guzman - Writing in CLIL Primary Education: Insights from a Trilingual Context	Serena Dal Maso, Emma Sartori Barana, Chiara Barachetti, Paola Dusi, Marinella Majorano, Maria Vender, Elena Florit - Becoming Readers Across Languages: a Shared-Reading intervention with Preschoolers from migrant families	Daniela Avello, Carmen Muñoz - Vocabulary learning from captioned video viewing in primary school learners: The influence of word- and context-related factors	
11:00	Nils Jaekel, Natalja Ulrich, Nadine Kolb - The Role of Extramural English Exposure in Early Language Learning: Evidence from Finnish and Norwegian Fourth Graders	Raúl Azpilicueta- Martínez, Irene Bustince Pérez - Beyond Exposure: Which motivational factors map onto oral proficiency in high-CLIL settings?		Daniela Avello, Carmen Muñoz - From Watching to Learning in the Primary EFL Classroom: Enhancing the Acquisition of Noun + Noun Constructions	
11:30	COFFEE BREAK				

June 4th Programme (cont'd)

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12:00	Parallel session 4 - Facultat de Lletres				
	Session 4.1 In-service Teachers SALA DE GRAUS	Session 4.2 Technology SALA D'ACTES	Session 4.3 Global education SEMINARI A	Session 4.4 Attitudes and Perceptions ROOM 207	Session 4.5 Methodologies ROOM 201
12:00	Tomas Kos, Yuki Otsuki, Wei-Tung Wang - Developing teacher understanding of input-based tasks in Japanese elementary English education	Victoria Geller, Katja Schwemmer - Young learners' encounters with English in the digital wilds: Contexts, motivations, and the role of multilingualism	Joanna Rokita-Jaśkow, Melanie Ellis - Global challenges in early language teaching for plurilingual futures	Paloma Delgado-Garza, María del Pilar García Mayo - "You gotta learn what you gotta learn": Young learners' and teachers' perceptions about explicit grammar teaching in the EFL classroom	Potheini Vaiouli - Singing and Language Learning in Early Childhood Settings: The case of Luxembourg
12:30	Katarzyna Brzosko-Barratt, Paulina Marchlik - Transnational language teachers' agency: Non-native English teachers working with young learners in Poland	Martina Irsara, Maria Cristina Gatti - University students and young learners co-constructing meaning across cultures online: A multimodal analysis of an Italo-Japanese English language exchange	Clara Reining, Katja Schwemmer - A Qualitative Study on the Importance of Education for Democracy in Primary Schools in Germany and the US - How (English) Teaching Can Make a Difference	Junjie Li, Weizhao Gong - Creative approach as ethical praxis in qualitative longitudinal research with children: Ethnographic insights into microethics	Catherine Hamilton, Faidra Faitaki - Creative pedagogies, rigorous research: Building an evidence base for early language education
13:00	Ramona Böttcher, Katharina Ponto, Kristin Kersten - Teachers' input quality and learners' attention predict early receptive L2 abilities			Anders Myrset, Milica Savic - Beyond please and may I: The intricacies of young second language learners' views of politeness	Katerina Spiess-Velcovska, Sylvie Dolakova - Language, Identity, and Learning Across Borders - Developing Children's Bilingual Competences
13:30	LUNCH				
14:00	POSTER SESSION				
15:00	Keynote 3: Dr Mario López-Gopar - AUDITORI				
16:00	COFFEE BREAK				

June 4th Programme (cont'd)

16:30	Parallel session 5 - Facultat de Lletres				
	Session 5.1 In-service Teachers SALA DE GRAUS	Session 5.2 CLIL SALA D'ACTES	Session 5.3 Global education SEMINARI A	Session 5.4 Picturebooks ROOM 207	Themed Symposium ROOM 201
16:30	Saskia Bruyninckx, Helena Taelman, Victoria Van Oss, Jantine L. Spilt - Teachers' language-stimulating interactions in preschool: Practices and variation across everyday activity settings	Patricia Uhl, Thorsten Piske - Oral Production Outcomes in German-French Elementary School CLIL Programs in Comparison to the Outcomes of Regular Foreign Language Classes	Alexandra Bos, Julie Waddington - EFL in minoritised language contexts: perspectives from early years educators in Catalonia	Annett Kaminski - Fostering empathy: Picturebooks for multilingual early English language classrooms	Elisabete Silva, Catarina Castro, Carlos Lindade, Sandie Mourão, Sandra Fradão, Carolyn Leslie - Theorizing teacher professional learning through classroom-based assessment and peer interaction: Insights from a blended MOOC
17:00	Roberta Contin - Uncovering the teacher's agency: identity, ideological positioning and bias in early language learning.	Natalja Ulrich, Anja Steinlen, Thorsten Piske, Nils Jaekel - Individual differences in phonological skills and their association with grammar and reading skills among multilingual Finnish and Norwegian 4th-grade English students.	Laura Kamandulytė-Merfeldienė, Joanna Rokita-Jaśkow - Teaching in Transition: Lithuanian Teachers' Views on Their Changing Role in an Immigrant Context	Tomas Kos - More than stories and language practice: picturebooks as pedagogical tools in pre-service CLIL teacher education	
17:30	Anna Bąk-Średnicka, Marzena Miekina - Ecological empathy in TESOL: A critical analysis of primary coursebooks		Laura Castañé Bassa - Exploration of a Catalan School: The Hidden Impact of Language Policies and Ideologies	Maria Nilsson - Meaning-making and engagement: Young learner perspectives on interactive picturebook readalouds.	
20:00	Conference dinner - Can Cortada (Barcelona)				

June 5th Programme

9:00	Research trajectory panel: Prof. Carmen Muñoz - AUDITORI				
10:00	Parallel session 6 - Facultat de Lletres				
	Session 6.1 Inclusive education and methodologies SALA DE GRAUS	Session 6.2 Teacher education SALA D'ACTES	Session 6.3 Plurilingual education SEMINARI A	Session 6.4 Methodologies ROOM 206	Session 6.5 Individual differences ROOM 207
10:00	Cristina Corcoll López, Mila Schwartz - Teachers as Agents of Linguistic Inclusion: A Comparative Study of Plurilingual Practices in Preschools in Spain and Israel	Nayr Ibrahim - Pedagogical entanglements between teacher education and classroom practice: insights on integrating multilingualism in ELT from the Portuguese context	Sara Castagnoli - From learning English to discovering the world. Promoting pluralistic approaches to language education in Italian primary schools.	Federica Clementi - Bridging Policy and Practice: Integrating Queer-Inclusive Children's Literature and Arts-Based Pedagogies in Norwegian EFL Classrooms	Werona Król-Gierat, Maria Concetta Carruba - Self-Concept Development in Children with Speech and Anxiety Disorders Learning English as a Foreign Language
10:30	Sue Garton - What diversity? Issues in recognising diversity in primary ELT	Alexandra Vraciu, Anna Marsol - Enhancing Language Teacher Education through Peer Observation: Insights from an Intervention with Pre-service Primary Education EFL Teachers in Catalonia	Claudine Kirsch - Language education in ECE in Luxembourg: multiple languages, aims and approaches	Nina Lazarevic - Learner-Generated Materials and Cognitive Engagement in EFL Writing for Young Learners	Rowena Kasprowicz, Carmen Silvestri, Jasmin Silver, Clare Savory, James Algie - The impact of individual and instructional factors on young learners' foreign language learning in low-input instructed settings
11:00	Belén Muñoz Muñoz - Making the Complex Learnable: Indirect Corrective Feedback in the Chilean EFL Classroom		Anja Pirih, Silva Bratož, Sonja Rutar, Mija Umer - Education students' attitudes and beliefs towards multilingualism in the school environment	Sandie Mourão, Mateja Dagarin Fojkar - Comparing picturebook read-aloud practices in primary English classrooms: Insights from Portugal and Slovenia	Agata Wolanin - Mapping primary school learners' linguistic repertoires, L2 motivation and attitudes across contexts: Evidence from Poland
11:30	COFFEE BREAK				
12:00	ELLRA AGM - SALA DE GRAUS				
13:30	LUNCH				

June 5th Programme (cont'd)

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14:30	Parallel session 7 - Facultat de Lletres				
	Session 7.1 Inclusive education SALA DE GRAUS	Session 7.2 Corrective feedback and Methodologies SALA D'ACTES	Session 7.3 Individual differences SEMINARI A	Themed Symposium ROOM 201	
14:30	Rachel Hall - Act it Out: Inclusive Early Language Learning Approaches with Drama	Dongxia Nie, Faidra Faitaki, Victoria Murphy - The Effects of Feedback on Young EFL Learners' Reading Development in the Digital Environment	Barry Bai - A network analysis of the relationships between students' self-regulated learning, motivation, and perceived teachers' support in cooperative learning in Hong Kong primary schools		
15:00	Alessa Haase - Planning the Unplannable (?) - A Case Study on Professional Task Planning for Diverse Learners in Primary EFL	Euline Cutrim Schmid, Hilal Şahin - Fostering Plurilingual Competence in Young Learners through Virtual Exchange	Jana Folch-Claramunt, Joel Espejo-Álvarez, Júlia Florit-Pons, Ingrid Vilà-Giménez, Pilar Prieto - Exploring language attitudes toward Catalan among recently arrived primary school children in Catalonia	Hanna Pöyliö, Otso Ahosola, Anssi Roiha, Anna Marzà, Karita Mård-Miettinen, Anne Pitkänen-Huhta, Elina Hakola, Pauliina Sopanen, Linda Saukko-Rauta - Researching Early Language and Literacy Learning with Visual Methodologies	
15:30	Michela Santangelo, Chiara Barachetti, Letizia Guerzoni, Domenico Cuda, Elena Florit, Marinella Majorano - Music as a language learning resource: An online program promotes vocabulary development of children with cochlear implants and maternal well-being		Junjie Li - To motivate or not? Analysing child participant reactivity through a creative, reflexive approach		
16:00	Keynote 4: Dr Sharon Unsworth - AUDITORI				
17:00	CONFERENCE CLOSING - AUDITORI				

Abstracts

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Keynote Presentations

Revisiting task-based research with young EFL learners: Reflections and future directions

María del Pilar García Mayo

Universidad del País Vasco (UPV/EHU)



Until recently, most studies within the Task-based language teaching framework have focused on young adults in university settings, despite the increasing global exposure of children to foreign languages, particularly English. In this talk, I will critically revisit research involving children learning English as a foreign language while performing collaborative tasks in both mainstream and content and language integrated learning contexts. Conducted within interactionist and sociocultural frameworks, these studies demonstrate that children engage in negotiation of meaning, predominantly use collaborative interaction patterns and focus on language form. Furthermore, the findings highlight how implementation variables – such as learner setup, task repetition, task modality, input enhancement, and pre-task planning – affect children's performance. The talk will conclude by identifying key challenges and directions for future research, particularly in relation to task design, children's individual differences, online game exposure, teacher-researcher collaboration, and institutional support. In today's multilingual classrooms, adopting pedagogical approaches that effectively support young language learners is more critical than ever.

My story, my history: on multilingual stories and storytelling

Sabine Little

University of Sheffield



Stories and storytelling are deeply rooted in early childhood, ideally both at home and in formal education settings. However, for multilingual children, they can also represent some of the earliest experiences of language separation –being expected to use different languages, and thus different parts of their identity, in different contexts. In this keynote, I will draw on a range of projects and initiatives that use stories, reading, and storytelling to break down linguistic barriers in formal early childhood education. These efforts support playful multilingual development and lay the foundation for integrating multiple languages into everyday classroom life. More importantly, I will explore how we might work with children directly – as partners and co-researchers – to learn from them and with them.



Learning from and with Children: Classroom- and-Research-Based Stories

Mario E. López Gopar

Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca

Currently, language education of Indigenous and low-income children in Mexico and in North America at large is considered to be in a problematic state, since their school achievement is much lower than that of mainstream children. Often, the blame for this “problem” falls on the children, their parents, or their cultures, which are seen as primitive and colonial (López-Gopar, 2016). Within this panorama, and based on my own experience as a kindergarten and elementary-school teacher and as a teacher-educator of pre-service “English” language teachers in Mexico and USA, and following from my own research studies involving English-language education, multilingualism, applied linguistics and decolonial theories, I narrate and analyze different classroom and research stories (Bruner, 2004) that challenge colonial views with respect to teaching English and other languages to young learners in diverse settings. Specifically, I address issues related to (multi)literacies, social constructs, linguistic identity and research on and with children.

Quantifying bilingual children's language experiences with the Q-BEx questionnaire

Sharon Unsworth

Radboud University



In this talk, I present the results from the international research project Q-BEx (<http://www.q-bex.org>) where we developed an online tool for researchers, teachers and clinicians to quantify bilingual children's language experience. Understanding how bilingual children vary in the extent to which they hear and use their two or more languages is important because such variation has been shown to predict children's language outcomes, in both school and heritage languages, and family well-being (Paradis, 2023). Informed by a Delphi consensus study (including all stakeholder-groups) and a state-of-art questionnaire review (De Cat et al., 2022; Kaščelan et al., 2022), the Q-BEx tool consists of an online questionnaire that users customize themselves, available in 30 languages, and includes a short, accessible summary for individual children. I will present results from the Q-Bex validation study that we recently conducted among multilingual children between the ages of 4 and 9 in the Netherlands, France and the UK.

Trajectory panel

Questions as signposts in my research trajectory

Carmen Muñoz

Universitat de Barcelona



My research trajectory could be summarized through a series of questions that spoke to me and challenged me as an applied linguist. An early question was: Is it true that young children in our schools can absorb English like sponges if they start very early? Lessons learned in the BAF project while exploring this question gave rise to two major ones. The first was: How can we provide learners with enough input to acquire an L2? This inspired me to explore input-rich learning scenarios inside the classrooms, such as CLIL, and beyond, such as Study Abroad and, more recently, learning through original-version audiovisual materials. The second question emerged from our observations of classroom learners: What determines the diverse learning trajectories of school learners? This launched a ten-year journey following children as they developed into more or less successful adolescent English learners. I continue to face new questions and seek answers.

Oral Presentations

Vocabulary learning from captioned video viewing in primary school learners: The influence of word- and context-related factors

Avello, D.¹, Muñoz, C.²

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Research examining the potential of audio-visual input has shown that foreign language learners' exposure to captioned videos results in significant vocabulary gains (Montero Perez, 2022; Muñoz, 2022; Reynolds et al., 2022). However, most of this evidence comes from studies with adolescents and adults, leaving open the question of how these benefits extend to young L2 learners in primary education (e.g. Casulleras, 2023). Therefore, this study addressed this gap by examining the effects of extensive exposure to captioned videos (eleven 10-minute episodes of an animated cartoon) on English vocabulary learning among 120 Spanish-speaking primary school learners (4th–5th grade; aged 9–11). More specifically, participants' gains were measured through pre- and posttests targeting written word-form recall and receptive form-meaning mapping. In addition, considering the variability in gains among target items as a function of the learning burden associated with each word (Barclay, 2021), this investigation explored the role of word- and context-related factors in the outcomes (i.e. orthographic regularity, length, concreteness, and frequency). The results revealed that the participants obtained significant vocabulary gains, especially at the level of receptive form-meaning mapping. In addition, fifth graders outperformed fourth graders, suggesting that the older group was better equipped to pick up words from the input (e.g. vocabulary knowledge, cognitive development). As regards word- and context-related factors, the results indicated that the odds of learning the target items increased with orthographic regularity, concreteness, and frequency. As for word length, the analyses suggested that shorter word forms were easier to recall, whereas longer word forms appeared to be more salient in the input and enhanced viewers' need to figure out their meaning. These findings offer empirical support for the use of captioned videos with young L2 learners and highlight the need for pedagogical scaffolding to enhance the learning of words with higher processing demands. Accordingly, the presentation will conclude with practical guidelines to optimize vocabulary learning through audiovisual input in the primary classroom.

Barclay, S. (2021). *Examining the Learning Burden and Decay of Second Language Vocabulary Knowledge* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University College London, Institute of Education.

Casulleras, M. (2023) *Language learning from subtitled TV series in the primary EFL classroom*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Barcelona.

Montero Perez, M. (2020). Incidental vocabulary learning through viewing video: The role of vocabulary knowledge and working memory. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 42(4), 749–773. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263119000706>

Muñoz, C. (2022). Audiovisual input in L2 learning. *Language, Interaction and Acquisition*, 13(1), 125-143. <https://doi.org/10.1075/lia.22001.mun>

Reynolds, B. L., Cui, Y., Kao, C., & Thomas, N. (2022). Acquisition through viewing captioned and subtitled video: A scoping review and meta-analysis. *Systems*, 10 (133). <https://doi.org/10.3390/systems10050133>

From Watching to Learning in the Primary EFL Classroom: Enhancing the Acquisition of Noun + Noun Constructions

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A usage-based perspective on L2 learning emphasizes that learners are sensitive to regularities in the input (Ellis, 2002). Accordingly, target language knowledge is gradually acquired in the form of linguistic constructions that vary in their level of abstraction and complexity, where vocabulary and grammar are closely intertwined (Tomasello, 2003). Evidence to date suggests that exposure to captioned videos fosters the learning of L2 grammatical constructions (e.g., Pattemore & Muñoz, 2020). However, learners may only benefit from this activity under conditions of sustained audiovisual exposure and/or intentional learning (Van Lommel et al., 2006). Moreover, learning outcomes appear to depend on the complexity of the target constructions and learners' L2 proficiency (Cintrón-Valentín et al., 2019). Yet, compared to vocabulary learning, few studies have examined the acquisition of L2 grammatical constructions through captioned videos, and even fewer have explored outcomes with primary school learners. This study investigated the extent to which 112 EFL primary school students (aged 9–11; 4th–5th grade) learned specific noun + noun (N + N) constructions encountered in 11 captioned videos, and whether they were able to infer and generalize the pattern to new items not presented during the treatment. English N + N constructions were selected due to their difficulty for L1-Spanish speakers and their absence from the primary school curriculum. Additionally, we aimed to examine the effects of two after-viewing activities: a meaning-focused (incidental learning) condition and a construction-focused (intentional learning) condition. Participants were randomly assigned to one of these conditions or to a control group with no video exposure. The comparison of written grammaticality judgment test scores at pretest and posttest revealed that both experimental groups outperformed the control group, but only those who completed construction-focused activities (both 4th and 5th graders) showed significant gains. Furthermore, within the construction-focused group, only fifth graders were able to generalize the pattern to new items, possibly due to their higher proficiency level and stage of cognitive development. Overall, these findings suggest that primary school learners may require longer exposure and explicit instructional support to internalize target grammatical constructions. The study offers practical implications for designing more effective audiovisual learning experiences that integrate meaning-focused comprehension with form-focused attention.

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Ellis, N. C. (2002). Frequency effects in language processing: A review with implications for theories of implicit and explicit language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 24, 143–188.

Pattemore, A. & Muñoz, C. (2020). Learning L2 constructions from captioned audio-visual exposure: The effect of learner-related factors. *System*, 93.

Tomasello, M. (2003). *Constructing a language: A usage-based theory of language acquisition*. Harvard University Press.

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Beyond Exposure: Which motivational factors map onto oral proficiency in high-CLIL settings?

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Research on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has seldom examined how motivation relates to young learners' oral performance, especially in high-intensity CLIL (high-CLIL) contexts (Azpilicueta-Martínez & Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023). This cross-sectional study investigates the relationship between five motivational dimensions (L2 learning experience, integrativeness, instrumentality-promotion, perceived difficulty of language learning, and L2 self-appraisal) and five oral proficiency subskills (coherence, fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary) in 64 Year-5 (Y5), and Year-6 (Y6) primary pupils enrolled in high-CLIL programmes (M = 10.61 years). Potential confounds were mitigated by working with comparable state schools and considering CLIL selection (Mearns et al. 2020) and extramural exposure. Motivation was measured with a 14-item online questionnaire adapted from previous studies (Pladevall-Ballester, 2018) and conceptually aligned to the five motivational dimensions. Items were rated on a four-point Likert scale and their validity examined via Cronbach's α and Pearson correlations. Oral proficiency was elicited using a picture-based narrative task (Heaton, 1966) previously piloted for this age range, and evaluated by three independent raters using a validated rubric (Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2025). Statistical analyses included Spearman correlations and bootstrap confidence intervals to compare correlation magnitudes across age groups.

In the combined sample, L2 self-appraisal revealed the most consistent positive associations with oral performance, significantly predicting coherence, grammar, and productive vocabulary, whereas perceived difficulty was negatively correlated to grammar. By contrast, no motivational dimension correlated with fluency or pronunciation measures. Crucially, age moderated these relations: Y5 learners displayed robust, positive links (integrativeness with all five subskills; L2 learning experience and self-appraisal with multiple subskills), while in Y6 these associations disappeared or turned negative. These patterns align with theories that emphasise the role of learners' self-perceptions in achievement (Covington, 1992) at the same time they provide evidence of the dynamic nature of motivation in childhood (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

Pedagogically, the findings highlight three priorities for high-CLIL primary classrooms. Firstly, the value of strengthening learners' L2 self-appraisal through scaffolded success, constructive feedback, and opportunities to experience competence. Secondly, the importance of providing an engaging L2 learning experience, particularly in Y5. Thirdly, the need to proactively refresh motivational support as pupils approach adolescence, when previously beneficial links weaken or reverse and instrumentality might remain too distant to drive immediate oral outcomes. Together, the results underscore the centrality of domain-specific confidence in oral performance within high-CLIL settings and the developmental sensitivity of motivation-achievement relations in late primary school.

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A network analysis of the relationships between students' self-regulated learning, motivation, and perceived teachers' support in cooperative learning in Hong Kong primary schools

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Past research (Authors, 2020) has identified the importance of both motivation and teachers' support (Tao et al., 2022) in self-regulated learning (SRL) in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts. The findings suggest that motivational beliefs (e.g., self-efficacy, interest and growth mindset) and perceived teachers' support (e.g., operational support and motivational support) impact use of SRL strategies (e.g., goal setting, monitoring and evaluating) in different ways. However, there is still an urgent need to understand how these factors may influence students' SRL strategy use in collaborative learning (Järvelä & Järvenoja, 2011) and to identify which factors are most crucial. The present study used a network perspective to investigate the relationships within and between students' self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies, motivational beliefs, and perceived teachers' support, and to examine how these relationships activate cooperative learning (CL) in Hong Kong primary schools. Moreover, we aimed to understand the nodes with the greatest power in association with other nodes in CL. Five hundred and thirty-three primary school students in Hong Kong participated in this study. The main results indicate that EFL students' SRL strategy use, motivation, and perceived teachers' support were interconnected and interdependent in the CL context. Among all relationships, those between goal setting and planning, self-efficacy, and perceived teachers' cognitive and assessment support were particularly crucial. Furthermore, SRL strategy use played a central role in the CL network. The estimated network was stable across different sub-samples defined by students' English proficiency levels. We highlight the significance and implications of these findings for research and teaching practice.

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Language Anxiety in Learning English as a Foreign Language among Slovenian Third-Grade Pupils

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Language anxiety refers to feelings of fear, tension, and apprehension that arise in contact with a foreign language. It constitutes a barrier to learners' acquisition and effective use of a new language, as it divides attention between the task at hand and the management of emotions. Language anxiety manifests as fear of negative evaluation, fear of speaking, and fear of assessment, each of which may hinder the transfer of information to brain regions responsible for language acquisition. The development of language anxiety is further shaped by personality traits, prior experiences, and the learning environment, which is influenced by classroom climate and teaching practices. While international studies confirm that language anxiety also occurs among younger learners, research focusing on primary school pupils in Slovenia remains limited. The present study investigated the extent to which language anxiety is present in foreign language learning among third-grade pupils (aged 8–9) in Slovenia. The sample comprised 305 pupils (153 boys and 152 girls) during the 2024/25 school year. The research focused on identifying which types of language anxiety are most prevalent, how pupils experience and describe anxiety, what triggers it, how they cope with it, and whether gender differences can be observed. The study was conducted in two phases. First, pupils completed a questionnaire, which was then followed by an open discussion. Findings indicate that most pupils reported low levels of anxiety. However, the most prominent concern was fear of peers' evaluation, followed by fear of assessment, fear of English lessons, and fear of speaking. Only in relation to fear of English lessons did boys report significantly higher levels of anxiety than girls; no statistically significant gender differences were observed in the other three domains. Pupils most frequently described language anxiety in terms of physical sensations of fear. It was most often triggered by feelings of insufficient knowledge or fear of obtaining low grades. Pupils reported a variety of coping strategies, ranging from deep breathing and counting to drinking water and even praying. The findings of this study are significant as they address a gap in the examination of language anxiety among younger learners in Slovenia, provide teachers with insights into influencing factors and coping mechanisms, and may contribute to the development of supportive classroom practices and pedagogical guidelines for more effective foreign language teaching.

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Ecological empathy in TESOL: A critical analysis of primary coursebooks

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This paper analyses primary TESOL coursebooks for grades 1–6, focusing on the extent to which they challenge anthropocentric bias. The rationale for this study is that educational discourse is often constrained by Cartesian “dualistic anthropocentric thinking” (Lambert, 2024), which deters (preservice) teachers from critically examining widely available didactic materials and thus reinforces such thinking in the language classroom. A case in point is an undignified depiction of a shark which, in didactic online sources or coursebooks, is shown being fed inedible objects or dressed in human clothes. To counter this, Lambert proposes a framework for ecological empathy, rooted in biophilia, deep ecology, cognition, and ethnography, which seeks to rebuild human–nature embeddedness through contextual understanding of ‘more-than-human’ interdependencies and earth–system perspective-taking. Previous studies show, for example, that preservice teachers’ empathy and sense of tenderness have been directed primarily towards individuals in human environments, with only occasional extensions to broader ecosystems through reflective, literature-based essays, storytelling, role-playing, creative writing, sensory experience, and scientific data analysis (Bąk-Średnicka, 2021). Drawing on eco-pedagogy (Freire, 2004; Gadotti, 2008; Kahn, 2010) and ‘more-than-human’ pedagogies (Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2015; Malone, 2018), we argue that the imbalance between references to animals as food and their representation as living beings is pedagogically significant. Such imbalance risks perpetuating anthropocentric values, whereas redressing it could foster ecological empathy, sustainability-oriented thinking, and intercultural reflection competences aligned with biophilia (Wilson, 1984), deep ecology (Næss, 1973), and UNESCO’s Education for Sustainable Development agenda (2017, 2020), contributing to a more equitable world. Initial findings from this TESOL coursebook examination reveal that the relationship between depicting animals and depicting them as meat is slightly negative: series for grades 1–3 with more animal pictures tend to contain fewer meat-related images, whereas those for grades 4–6 more often depict animals such as cows, chickens, or pigs exclusively as food. Although the correlation is modest and not a strong pattern, it hints at a possible trend worthy of further exploration. These findings suggest that while primary TESOL coursebooks increasingly include animal imagery, their predominantly anthropocentric framing limits opportunities, especially for older learners to develop ecological empathy as, apart from pets, farm animals are still shown as food, and exotic ones as sources of amusement. Addressing this gap may guide TESOL teacher education towards more ethically and environmentally responsive pedagogies, extending intercultural reflection towards interspecies and ecological sensitivity.

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Developing regulatory abilities through language learning: Majority and heritage language competencies predict emotion regulation and flexible goal adjustment in young learners

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Studies on psychological well-being show that children and adolescents are increasingly burdened by multiple societal and individual stressors (Kaman et al., 2025). In coping with these stressors and adapting to uncontrollable external demands, regulatory abilities such as emotion regulation (ER) and flexible goal adjustment (FGA) are pivotal (Brandtstädter, 2015; Brasseur et al., 2013).

Two lines of research suggest that strong language skills may foster the development of these abilities: Recent studies examining the relationship between regulatory abilities and multilingualism indicate a positive association (Greve et al., 2021; Koch et al., 2023), attributing it to heterogeneous linguistic and cultural contexts multilinguals operate in. However, this question has not yet been addressed for younger learners.

Secondly, strong language skills in general have been related to successful ER, as language presumably serves as a mental tool for regulating thought and behavior (Vallotton & Ayoub, 2011). Regarding majority language skills, Kalland & Linnavalli (2023) and Nook et al. (2017) show associations between ER and language proficiency. It remains unclear, however, whether this extends to heritage-language skills.

In line with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), schools should aim to foster regulatory abilities that help students deal with societal challenges (UNESCO, 2022). To implement this in linguistically diverse classrooms, the current evidence raises two questions:

RQ1: Does children's degree of multilingualism (DM) predict their regulatory abilities (FGA, ER)?

RQ2: Do majority-language skills (MLS) and heritage-language skills (HLS) predict children's regulatory abilities?

We conducted a cross-sectional survey-study with $N=144$ 10–14-year-olds ($M=12.23$ years, $SD=0.81$) using three scales for ER (CSI: Bonanno et al., 2020; FREE: Burton & Bonanno, 2016; CFS: Kato, 2012), and one for FGA (Brandtstädter & Renner, 1990), and language-background scales from (Anderson et al., 2018) for DM, HLS, and MLS.

Controlling for age, regressions with DM as predictor of the regulatory variables showed no significant effects (RQ1). In contrast, MLS positively predicted several regulatory abilities (FREE: $R^2=.055$, $\beta=.210$, $p=.023$; FGA: $R^2=.046$, $\beta=.215$, $p=.018$), and HLS predicted even more (FREE: $R^2=.073$, $\beta=.245$, $p=.004$; CFS: $R^2=.090$, $\beta=.283$, $p<.001$; FGA: $R^2=.032$, $\beta=.179$, $p=.047$) (RQ2).

Although these findings differ from adult studies on multilingualism, they do indicate a link between language proficiency and regulatory abilities not only in the majority language but also, and especially, in the heritage language, underscoring the importance of fostering both heritage- and majority-language skills in schools to support the development of strong regulatory abilities in all students, regardless of their linguistic background (Gantefort & Maahs, 2020; Gogolin, 2020).

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Does learners' degree of bilingualism and working memory predict L2 grammar and lexicon?

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Studies on multilingual learners' L2 acquisition are heterogeneous, ranging from negative (Elsner, 2007) or null effects (Steinlen, 2021) to advantages (Cenoz, 2013; Hopp et al., 2018). These effects vary as a function of individual social and cognitive variables (Fleckenstein et al., 2018; Hopp et al., 2018).

Among cognitive factors, working memory (WM) has repeatedly been proposed to predict L2 outcomes, primarily for L2 grammar acquisition (Engel de Abreu & Gathercole, 2012; Martin & Ellis, 2012), assuming higher cognitive efforts arising from the simultaneous processing of grammatical structures and additional information in the new L2 (Adler, 2023). According to Wen et al. (2019), WM functions as a processing device that supports attentional control crucial for grammar learning. In contrast, WM is typically not considered a major predictor of lexical L2 acquisition (Adler, 2023). However, differential effects of individual cognitive and linguistic variables remain insufficiently understood. The current longitudinal study aims to address this gap.

It investigates combined effects of bilingual language proficiency and working memory (WM) on the L2-acquisition of 5th graders' English competences, while controlling for their socioeconomic status (SES), focusing on the research question:

Do learners' degree of bilingualism and their WM capacity at the beginning of grade 5 predict their receptive lexical and grammatical L2 skills differentially over time?

To address this question, data from the longitudinal multi-site project PROMISE (Promoting Multilingualism in School Education) on learners' cognitive and linguistic development in different German school contexts were used. For the present study, 45 learners across 6 classes were tested at the beginning (T0) and at the end of 5th grade (T1). WM was elicited at T0 using WISC-V. Degree of bilingualism (DB) was established as the sum score of learners' speaking, understanding, reading, and writing skills in their two strongest languages (7-point Likert-scales: 1 – 'a bit' to 7 – 'native-like') from a parental questionnaire, which also yielded HISEI-indicators for SES. At T1, L2-English lexical reception was elicited through the PPVT-5, L2 grammar reception through the ELIAS Grammar Test II.

Results of backwards regression analyses with WM, DB and SES as predictors showed that only DB predicted L2 lexicon significantly over time ($R^2=.137$, $\beta=.317$, $p=.008$), while L2 grammar was predicted by WM, with DB slightly above significance level ($R^2=.195$, WM: $\beta=.386$, $p=.008$, DB: $\beta=.246$, $p=.083$).

Results support differential assumptions of WM on L2 grammatical but not lexical acquisition, and a supportive role of DB particularly for L2 lexicon.

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EFL in minoritised language contexts: perspectives from early years educators in Catalonia

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The introduction of English as a foreign language (EFL) in educational contexts striving to sustain a minoritised language presents significant challenges. This presentation addresses this issue in the multilingual context of Catalonia, specifically examining the tension between the early introduction of EFL and the simultaneous need to preserve and promote a minoritised language (Catalan), while also recognising and valuing the diverse home languages present in early childhood settings.

We begin by outlining the educational and sociolinguistic context of Catalonia, with particular attention to the regulatory framework governing language use in formal education and the specific guidelines for early childhood education and care. We then present findings from a qualitative study that explored teacher perspectives on the introduction of EFL in this context, drawing on data collected over a ten-month period (2024–2025) through semi-structured interviews with pre-primary teachers and observations in early childhood settings. A reflective thematic analysis of the data revealed a range of concerns, most notably regarding the need to prioritise the (minoritised) language of schooling over the introduction of EFL. Nevertheless, and in line with research conducted in other educational settings, our findings indicate that teachers' concerns are often marginalised, with foreign language-policy decisions often shaped by societal pressures rather than pedagogical considerations. Focusing on the way in which EFL is implemented in pre-primary education, the study identified two contrasting approaches: a monolingual approach, advocating strict separation between English and other languages in the classroom, and a more flexible multilingual approach that promotes connections across languages.

Building on the key insights from our analysis, we conclude by proposing targeted measures to address the challenges identified. These proposals are informed by the valuable perspectives of teachers in our study and grounded in the significant scholarly contributions made in this field in recent years. While there is broad consensus that early exposure to more than one language enhances cognitive development and fosters intercultural understanding, we contend that a more critical stance is needed regarding the early introduction of EFL in minoritised language settings, foregrounding practitioners' experiences and advocating for context-sensitive language policies. Although our presentation focuses on the specific context of Catalonia, we consider the findings relevant to other multilingual contexts where majority and minority languages coexist.

Teachers' input quality and learners' attention predict early receptive L2 abilities

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Foreign language acquisition takes place within a complex interplay of internal and environmental factors (de Bot et al., 2007). While studies highlight an interrelation between cognitive abilities and language acquisition (Bialystok et al., 2017), recent research focuses increasingly on the role of stimulating interactions as provided in the classroom ('input quality') and in the family ('parent-child-interaction'); the latter often correlates strongly with the family's socioeconomic status (SES) (Kersten, 2023).

Our study focuses on the research question:

Are young ESL learners' lexical and grammatical reception predicted by their attentional abilities, working memory (WM), socio-economic status (SES), and quality of received teacher input?

N = 79 German learners of L2-English in immersion and regular schools were tested twice in an interval of one year (grades 3–4), using the BUEGA bp-test (Esser et al., 2008) for attention, subtests of the WISC-IV (Petermann & Petermann, 2011) for working memory (WM), the British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS, Dunn, 2009) for lexical, the ELIAS Grammar Test 2 (Kersten et al., 2012) for grammatical reception, and a parental survey for social and linguistic background. Teachers' input quality was assessed through classroom observations via the Teacher Input Observation Scheme (Kersten et al., 2018).

A regression analysis with the three predictor-variables at test-time 1 showed significant predictions for grammar reception at test-time 2 (attention: $\beta = -.452$, $p < .001$, input-quality: $\beta = .245$, $p = .028$, SES: $\beta = .419$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .450$), and for lexical reception (attention: $\beta = -.384$, $p = .002$, input-quality: $\beta = .262$, $p = .036$, SES: $\beta = .293$, $p = .018$, $R^2 = .302$), while working memory did not predict L2 skills.

While strong effects of SES on language development are a robust finding in SLA research (e.g. Schwab & Lew-Williams, 2016), the effects of teachers' input quality as a predictor of L2-development highlights the potential of language-sensitive strategies in the classroom. Moreover, the positive effect of attention (effect to be interpreted reversely) on both L2 lexical and grammar outcomes a year later, adds an important aspect to research on the association of linguistic and cognitive skills. The absence of a WM effect will be discussed in terms of its role in L2 intake relative to attention.

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Critical visual literacy in L2 English teacher education: Opportunities and challenges of the Redesign task

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The multimodal textual environments that today's English users encounter have become increasingly diverse and complex. To prepare young language learners to navigate these, teachers of English as a second or additional language (L2) need strategies for making informed choices about classroom materials and for engaging learners in critical practices with those materials. With this in mind, this study adopts a critical visual literacy (CVL) approach, which highlights the social and cultural situatedness of texts, and emphasizes the importance of visuals as meaning-making resources. More specifically, the study employs a Redesign task (Janks, 2010): a cyclical process that consists of critiquing an original design (any text), before creating a new design (redesign) that better reflects the reader's worldviews. Redesign has been shown to be particularly well suited for encouraging engagement with intended and implied meanings, with underlying culturally embedded ideologies (Brown, 2022) and with representations of diversity (Brown & Savić, forthcoming), both with secondary school English learners (Brown, 2022) and in-service teachers (Harste & Albers, 2012).

Conducted within a teacher education course for pre-service teachers training to teach grades 1-10, this small-scale study sets out to explore the opportunities and challenges the redesign task offers for pre-service English language teachers practicing critical visual literacy, as well as their reflections on classroom implications and applications of the redesign task. The redesign task was used to frame both the instruction and the data collection, and included the pre-service teachers critiquing a multimodal representation of the USA from a 6th-grade English textbook and creating their own redesigns, i.e. new representations of the USA for the same audience (11-12-year-old learners). The data includes seven hours of audio-recorded group discussions, individual and group redesigns, individual written reflections, and group lesson plans, collected during two cycles of the redesign task.

The data analysis has identified numerous instances of pre-service teachers' critical engagement with the multimodal text designed for 6th graders in Norway and their reflections on the potential uses of the redesign task with young learners. The findings are presented through the lens of the opportunities for and challenges of critical engagement at the various stages of the redesign task. The presentation concludes with a discussion of the opportunities for employing the redesign task with primary English learners to foster their intercultural learning and understandings of diversity.

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Teachers' language-stimulating interactions in preschool: Practices and variation across everyday activity settings

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High-quality teacher-child language interactions are essential for fostering young children's language development in preschool (Dickinson & Porche, 2011; Farrow et al., 2020). Especially in linguistically and culturally diverse settings, equitable language support is essential for fostering all children's communication and learning. Research has identified a range of language-stimulating (LS) practices, such as encouraging language production, providing feedback, and offering rich language input (Peleman et al., 2020). However, less is known about how frequently these practices are used in everyday small-group activities and how their use varies across different activity types.

This study investigates LS practices among 179 preschool teachers and 716 children (age 4-6). The sample reflected linguistic and cultural diversity: 31.5% of the children spoke a different mother tongue than the language of instruction, and 23.3% of the mothers had an immigration background. Using structured video observations, we examined teachers' LS behaviors during three common small-group activities: shared book reading, a STEM activity, and snack time. Each 10-minute video (531 videos in total) was coded using the Language Stimulation Assessment for Teachers, a newly developed observational tool based on existing measures (e.g., TILRS (Girolametto & Greenberg, 2000)) that assesses twelve distinct LS practices. The intraclass correlation coefficient of this instrument was 0.72 (95% CI 0.33-0.88).

Findings reveal that LS practices were used infrequently overall, with substantial variation across practices and activity settings. Open-ended questioning, pausing for responses, and multimodal support were the most commonly observed practices, while scaffolding, explicit correction, and meaning negotiation were rarely used. Notably, LS practices varied significantly by activity setting: book reading elicited the most opportunities for language production, STEM activities prompted a broader range of LS strategies, and snack time featured the least LS strategies, though it included more self- and parallel talk.

These findings underscore the importance of several crucial but underutilized LS practices that need to be addressed in professional development, taking into account the unique opportunities of different small-group activities. By identifying patterns in LS practice use, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how to optimize language-rich interactions in preschool.

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Transnational language teachers' agency: Non-native English teachers working with young learners in Poland

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Language teachers assume complex and diverse professional roles influenced by their individual identity construction, formal pedagogical preparation, and the wider sociocultural contexts in which their teaching practices are embedded. This paper aims to explore the dimensions of teacher agency among transnational non-native English language teachers from outside of Poland working with young English language learners (YELLs).

With the increasing internationalisation of English language teaching, more non-native English teachers are pursuing careers outside their countries of origin, yet their experiences remain underexplored (Nazari, 2025). Gaining insight into the agency of transnational language teachers is especially important due to their unique ethnolinguistic backgrounds.

By adopting an ecological perspective to explore language teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2015), we conceptualise agency not as an individual trait but as something achieved through dynamic interactions between teachers and their professional environments. This approach allowed us to incorporate both the contextual constraints and temporal dimensions. Agency is considered the result of dynamic interactions among iterative, practical-evaluative, and projective elements, i.e. past professional and personal life experiences, present context, and aspirations, hopes and goals (Priestley et al., 2015; Tao & Gao, 2021).

This qualitative study draws on a series of semi-structured interviews with ten teachers working with YELLs in bilingual preschools and primary schools across Poland. All participants are novice in-service language teachers, coming from the 'expanding circle' of English. Data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and emergent themes related to agency enactment and identity construction within their ecological contexts. Our analysis revealed four interconnected themes that capture both the vulnerabilities and strengths of transnational teachers: language insecurity, pressures of silencing, being put on display, and feelings of empowerment. These themes illustrate that teacher agency emerges through continuous negotiation within complex ecological contexts. While agency is constrained by factors such as native-speaker ideologies and institutional power structures, it is also enabled by teachers' professional expertise, as well as their cultural and linguistic repertoires. Consequently, transnational teachers are often required to exercise their agency when teaching in unfamiliar environments, engaging with students from diverse sociolinguistic backgrounds, challenging native-speaker norms, and adapting to dominant pedagogical practices (Kayi-Aydar et al., 2019; Tao & Gao, 2021).

This study fills an important gap by highlighting the experiences of transnational teachers working with YELLs and shows how education contexts can either support or limit transnational novice teachers' ability to exercise agency.

Kayi-Aydar, H. (2019). 2 Language Teacher Agency: Major Theoretical Considerations, Conceptualizations and Methodological. In H. Kayi-Aydar, X. Gao, E. R. Miller, M. Varghese, & G. Vitanova (Eds.). *Theorizing and analyzing language teacher agency* (pp. 10–21). Multilingual Matters.

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From learning English to discovering the world. Promoting pluralistic approaches to language education in Italian primary schools

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Over the past two decades, European institutions have increasingly advocated for plurilingual and intercultural approaches to language education (e.g. CoE 2022), supported by research highlighting the significant benefits offered by plurilingualism and intercultural education at both individual and societal levels. Most notably, plurilingual competence has been shown to enhance cognitive flexibility, metalinguistic awareness and problem-solving skills, while also fostering intercultural awareness and social cohesion (Beacco et al., 2016).

In an era of growing linguistic and cultural diversity, language education must move beyond monolingual paradigms and embrace pluralistic approaches that foster inclusivity and plurilingual competence since primary and even pre-primary education. Implementing such approaches requires changes in pedagogical practices and teacher training. Both pre-service and in-service educators need to be equipped with strategies to integrate multiple languages into their teaching practices, enabling learners to navigate and leverage linguistic diversity, and creating innovative and more dynamic learning environments.

This talk presents ongoing efforts to promote plurilingual education and plurilingual educational practices in the context of pre-service primary teacher education at the University of Macerata, Italy, aligning with recommendations about intercultural education from the Indicazioni Nazionali per il curricolo della scuola dell'infanzia e del primo ciclo di istruzione (Italian Ministry of Education, MIUR 2012) and building on existing key frameworks such as the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures (Candelier et al., 2012). In fact, although English remains the only foreign language formally included in Italy's primary curriculum, ministerial guidelines advocate for the development of plurilingual and intercultural awareness from early educational levels. Accordingly, a short module on pluralistic approaches – mainly including intercomprehension (De Carlo & Garbarino 2022), awakening to languages (e.g. Coelho et al. 2018) and translanguaging (García & Wei 2014; Cenoz & Gorter 2022) – has recently been included in the programme of the students' fifth-year English and TEFL course, adding to already existing CLIL modules. This has also led to some masters' degree theses exploring the application of these approaches in pre-primary and primary school contexts. The presentation will showcase plurilingual projects implemented by students in local schools, illustrating their educational value for young learners.

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Exploration of a Catalan School: The Hidden Impact of Language Policies and Ideologies

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Promoting linguistic diversity and the Catalan language in education presents a considerable challenge in Catalonia. Despite being an official language, Catalan holds a minoritized status, and the presence of linguistic diversity alongside Spanish is frequently perceived as a threat to its preservation (Rodà-Bencells, 2009). Language policy designates Catalan as the primary language of instruction to bolster its usage. However, research suggests that this strategy tends to subordinate home languages and reinforces a monolingual mindset (Trench-Parera, 2016). While many scholars have examined the language ideologies of students and teachers to understand the limitations of this monolingual perspective (Newman et al., 2013), there is a notable gap in research on the role of language policies and ideologies in the learning environment and practices.

This study seeks to address that gap by exploring how language ideologies and policies are manifested in the learning environment and practices through the perceptions of participants. It focuses on the design, representation, and usage of languages in a Catalan primary school, drawing on Laihonon and Szabó's (2018) concept of spaces and practices as (un)visible reflections of policies and ideologies. I adopted ethnographic methods, involving classroom observations and walking interviews with pupils, teachers and school staff throughout the school. Discourse analysis was employed to examine how language constructs social meaning, relationships, and power dynamics within the school.

Findings reveal that Catalan is the dominant language, while presence of other languages, including Spanish, remains limited. Participants frequently distinguished language use across different time slots and spaces, suggesting that specific arrangements and practices reinforce and perpetuate linguistic hierarchies. These hierarchies, in turn, support certain curriculum objectives while disregarding others. Notably, pupils' multilingual repertoires were only represented once in an artwork, underscoring the need for more multilingual materials. This research lays the foundation for interventions that foster practices valuing learners' multilingual abilities.

Laihonon, P., & Szabó, T. P. (2018). Studying the visual and material dimensions of education and learning. *Linguistics and Education*, 44, 1–3.

Newman, M., Patiño-Santos, A., & Trenchs-Parera, M. (2013). Linguistic reception of Latin American students in Catalonia and their responses to educational language policies. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 16(2), 195–209.

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Trenchs-Parera, M. (2016). Multilingualism in Catalan secondary schools: An exploration of language practices and challenges. *APAC ELT Journal*, 82, 5–12.

Multilingualism at the School Gate: Parental Knowledge and Attitudes Toward Language Diversity in Early Primary Education in Poland

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Multilingualism has only recently become a noticeable feature of Polish education, which for decades remained largely monolingual. This change has been significantly accelerated by the large-scale migration following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022 (Rokita-Jaśkow et al., 2023). While several post-2022 studies have examined how Polish foreign language teachers address the challenge of working with linguistically diverse pupils (see, for example, Nosidlak, 2023; Rokita-Jaśkow et al., 2024 & 2025), much less is known about parents' perspectives. Because parental orientations strongly shape children's beliefs, influence school-family cooperation and affect community acceptance of diversity (Van Lier, 2004; Rokita-Jaśkow et al., 2023), it is essential to investigate how parents perceive and evaluate this new multilingual educational reality.

The present study aims to investigate Polish parents' knowledge of and attitudes toward multilingualism in early primary education, with particular attention to the local variation of school contexts and to migration-related changes after 2022. The study focuses on parents or legal guardians of children attending grades 1–3 of Polish primary schools. A mixed-methods design is employed, combining a large-scale questionnaire survey with follow-up interviews. The questionnaire includes sections on demographic background, parental knowledge of multilingualism and language development, and attitudes toward multilingualism in schools, covering dimensions such as general beliefs, pedagogical practices, allocation of resources, and social integration. Parents are also asked to reflect on their perceptions of changes in schools since 2022, including the presence of Ukrainian children and other multilingual pupils.

The study is guided by the following hypotheses: Parents' knowledge of multilingualism is expected to be uneven, combining accurate understandings with persistent misconceptions. Parental attitudes toward multilingualism are expected to be shaped by school context and by children's exposure to multilingual peers. Parents with greater educational, linguistic, or migratory experience are expected to express more positive orientations toward multilingualism. The growing presence of multilingual pupils in schools is expected to foster generally more favourable parental views on diversity, though concerns about equity and resources may remain.

By identifying patterns of parental knowledge and attitudes, the study seeks to provide practical recommendations for schools, local authorities, and policymakers on how to strengthen communication with parents, counteract misconceptions, and promote inclusive practices in increasingly multilingual classrooms.

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Bridging Policy and Practice: Integrating Queer-Inclusive Children's Literature and Arts-Based Pedagogies in Norwegian EFL Classrooms

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Despite Norway's strong policy emphasis on inclusion and democratic education, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curricula often remain silent on issues of gender and sexuality, leaving limited room for queer representation in early language learning. In this presentation I address this policy-practice gap, by exploring how queer-inclusive children's literature and arts-based pedagogies can promote democratic competences, as outlined in the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) and the Norwegian LK20 Core Curriculum, among young EFL learners.

Grounded in sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), and queer literacies (Luhmann, 1998; Kumashiro, 2002; Blackburn & Clark, 2011), this research conceptualises language learning as a multimodal, ethical, and affective process. It examines how engagement with diverse identities through language and art can nurture empathy, curiosity, and openness to difference among young learners. The research was conducted in two fifth-grade Norwegian EFL classrooms, using a qualitative interpretive design. I acted as facilitator and observer as students engaged with a queer-themed picturebook through multimodal tasks (drawing, creative writing, sculpting), and reflective dialogue. Data from the classroom interactions, including classroom interactions, field notes, student artefacts, and follow-up discussions, were analysed thematically and multimodally, guided by RFCDC descriptors of democratic competence.

Findings suggest that integrating queer-inclusive narratives within multimodal literacy activities nurtures empathy, critical curiosity, and respect for diversity, which are key dimensions of democratic competence (Council of Europe, 2018). Students' creative outputs revealed complex negotiations of identity, belonging, and fairness, reflecting emergent intercultural and ethical awareness beyond traditional EFL learning outcomes. However, tensions emerged between inclusive policy ideals and classroom constraints, such as curricular standardisation, limited teacher training, and uncertainty around addressing gender and sexuality in early education (Paiz, 2019; DePalma, 2013). In response, a comprehensive teacher's guide was developed, providing theoretical grounding, explicit links to LK20 and RFCDC aims, and adaptable, print-ready materials for classroom use.

The study argues for a forward-looking model of language education that integrates multimodal literacies and queer-inclusive pedagogies to support inclusive and equitable practices in multilingual, culturally diverse classrooms. By positioning queer-inclusive, arts-based literacy practices as a bridge between policy ambitions and classroom practice, the research advances a forward-looking model of language education, one that recognises linguistic diversity, fosters inclusion, and nurtures children's capacity to act as empathetic, critically engaged citizens in a multilingual world.

This presentation contributes to an understanding of early EFL education as a democratic space for exploration, through multiple modes of meaning-making.

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Uncovering the teacher's agency: identity, ideological positioning and bias in early language learning.

Contin, R.

Universitat Ramon Llull - FPCEE Blanquerna

When considering early language learning in Italy, a country internationally recognised for the quality of its early childhood education, two pressing considerations arise. On the one hand, the school environment, especially in pre-school education, can be fertile ground for language acquisition (Daloiso, 2009). On the other hand, there is a lack of a defined national framework regulating the inclusion of English at this stage of education, as well as systematic training for teachers of this language. Despite this situation, various independent initiatives have been developed over time by different institutions (Santipolo, 2016).

The main objective of this research is to examine how teachers' identities, ideological positions and personal perceptions intersect with their knowledge of linguistic, communicative and plurilingual competences in early language learning contexts. For this study, we have drawn on preliminary data collected during field research carried out in three institutions in Italy.

It is widely recognised that supporting children learning languages at an early age requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the 'whole child' (Mourão, 2020), thereby promoting the full development of their communicative and multilingual skills, particularly considering that the contemporary society in which we live is increasingly diverse, complex and based on continuous interaction and communication (Balboni, 2019).

In this perspective, the quality of early language education seems closely associated with the professional preparation of educators who guide children's learning processes. Establishing a stimulating and pedagogically effective learning environment therefore requires professional competencies: through systematic and targeted training, educators might develop expertise in early childhood language education—that is, in the complex processes underpinning children's first language acquisition, their early encounters with additional languages, and their integration of diverse verbal and non-verbal communicative modalities (Daloiso, Favaro, 2021).

On the basis of these considerations, this presentation analyses the role of teacher education and continuous professional development in promoting not only linguistic and pedagogical awareness, but also intercultural sensitivity.

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Teachers as Agents of Linguistic Inclusion: A Comparative Study of Plurilingual Practices in Preschools in Spain and Israel

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This paper presents findings from two qualitative case studies conducted in preschool settings located in two distinct sociolinguistic contexts: a multicultural neighbourhood in Barcelona (Spain) and a small peripheral city in Israel. Both preschools are characterised by a high degree of linguistic and cultural diversity, with children and families speaking a range of home languages alongside the dominant societal ones (Barragán, 2002; Barragán & Fernández Sierra, 2019).

The study aims to understand the role of early childhood teachers in shaping linguistic practices in their classrooms, focusing on the plurilingual and communicative strategies they employ to foster inclusion, interaction, and language development. The research is grounded in four key theoretical perspectives: (1) the teacher as a sociocultural mediator (Schwartz & Gorbatt, 2018); (2) linguistically and culturally responsive pedagogy (Bowden, 2025); (3) teacher agency and professional initiative (Schwartz et al., 2023; Iversen, 2024); and (4) the early development of plurilingual and communicative competence (Council of Europe, 2020).

Using ethnographic methods—participant observation, video documentation, and semi-structured interviews—the study explores how teachers navigate between institutional language policies, curricular expectations, and the linguistic repertoires of their pupils (Tresserras & Palou Sangrà, 2023). The comparative approach highlights both convergences and divergences in pedagogical practices. While Spain and Israel differ in their degree of institutional support for the use of home languages in early education (Kaplan Toren & Schwartz, 2024), in both cases teachers emerge as key mediators between policy and classroom practice (Schwartz et al., 2023).

Findings reveal that teachers act as central agents of linguistic visibility and inclusion, through both explicit strategies—such as translanguaging activities, multilingual displays, or storytelling in multiple languages (Corcoll López & González Davies, 2018)—and implicit communicative practices that validate children’s diverse linguistic repertoires. Despite differing frameworks, teachers in both contexts demonstrate creativity, flexibility, and sensitivity in promoting linguistically inclusive learning environments (Bowden, 2025).

However, the study also identifies tensions between teachers’ beliefs, available resources, and curricular constraints (Tresserras & Palou Sangrà, 2023). The lack of systematic institutional support often compels teachers to rely on personal initiative to foster plurilingualism (Barragán & Fernández Sierra, 2019). The paper concludes by reflecting on implications for language education policy and teacher training, underscoring the pivotal role of early childhood educators as agents of change in advancing linguistic equity and social cohesion from the earliest stages of schooling.

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CLIL in Pre-service Teacher Training: Analyzing Syllabi for English Courses in Italian Primary Education Degrees

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CLIL has been introduced in most European countries, including Italy, where “CLIL provision [is] available in all schools at some stage” (Eurydice, 2017, p. 13) considering that it is compulsory (Moratti Law, 53/2003) in the last year of high schools. To ensure CLIL is implemented, teacher training must be a cornerstone of this process, particularly at the primary level where CLIL is still in its early stages. Therefore, teacher training programmes should cater not only to linguistic requirements, but pedagogical training is necessary to provide high-quality teacher training (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2023). This research analyses the English language course syllabi within Primary Education degree programs in Italy, focusing on CLIL training for pre-service teachers. The study collected syllabi from all 37 Italian universities offering Primary Education degrees, using university websites to download documents related to CLIL and English language teaching. This produced a sample of 257 documents. To analyse these data, the SPSS software was used for the quantitative and MAXQDA for the qualitative part. The research questions explore the competencies pre-service teachers are expected to acquire for their CLIL practice and the specific approaches to content, assessment, and methodology within CLIL. Findings indicate that CLIL is mentioned in only 15% of the English language course syllabi, with 53% of CLIL training in the final year. As for competencies (Pérez-Cañado, 2018), linguistic and pedagogical competencies are the most frequently addressed, whereas interpersonal and collaborative competencies appear less often. Most CLIL-related content focuses on linguistic competence and language proficiency, assessment is largely limited to final, written evaluations while student-centered approaches are presented in methodology. In conclusion, it is essential to broaden the focus within these course syllabi since CLIL pre-service teacher training requires a comprehensive approach that includes early integration throughout the program, a stronger focus on collaborative and interpersonal skills and diversified assessment methods.

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Parental Involvement and Home Support in Children's EFL Education

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It is widely known that various factors are influential in children's foreign language learning, such as teachers and materials. Among such factors, families play a key role in directly influencing children's overall success as well as their foreign language learning at school. Yet, we need to know more about what happens in young language learners' home environments and how family practices influence their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. As part of a larger longitudinal study concerned with extracurricular factors and parent involvement, this study examines foreign language learning from the perspective of parents and the home environment, providing an overview of the home dimension of early EFL learning.

It has several specific aims:

- 1) to investigate the extent and nature of parents' involvement in their children's EFL learning by presenting the specific behaviors and actions they adopt to support school-related English language learning at home; and
- 2) to explore possible relationships between family characteristics—such as parents' educational background and English proficiency—and their levels or degrees of involvement in their child's EFL education.

For these purposes, the study involved 200 parents from different regions of Türkiye, whose children were students in public schools between the 2nd and 6th grades. Data were collected through a background information questionnaire and a survey that included both open-ended and closed-ended items addressing parental involvement in children's school-related English work, parents' perspectives on their child's EFL education, and the English materials and activities they provided for use at home. The dataset and analyses comprised both quantitative and qualitative components. Frequency counts were used to summarize the quantitative findings, while qualitative responses were analyzed through systematic coding to identify recurring themes and patterns. Together, these analyses provide a comprehensive picture of how Turkish parents perceive, experience, and contribute to their children's EFL development at school. Results that present various involvement practices due to different family backgrounds will be shared with the audience. In addition, practical implications for supporting parents and strengthening collaboration between families and schools will be discussed.

Fostering Plurilingual Competence in Young Learners through Virtual Exchange

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Virtual exchanges (VEs) have gained increasing prominence in language education as meaningful contexts for intercultural communication and collaboration (O'Dowd, 2021). While VEs are often implemented in lingua franca environments where plurilingual practices naturally emerge, these practices are rarely recognized or intentionally embedded in pedagogical design (Bündgens-Kosten, 2020; Helm & Hauck, 2022). Consequently, the potential of VEs to actively foster learners' plurilingual competence remains underexplored. To address this gap, the present study investigates how plurilingual elements can be systematically integrated into VE design and how such integration impacts learners' engagement and competence development. The investigation was conducted within the European project TEMPLATE (Technology-Mediated Plurilingual Activities in Language Teacher Education), funded under the Erasmus+ Program. TEMPLATE aimed to develop professional development resources for (foreign) language teachers seeking to integrate technology-mediated plurilingual tasks into their classroom practice. To achieve this, several teacher education modules were designed, implemented, and evaluated across participating institutions. The study presented in this paper draws on research conducted during the implementation of one of these modules, which focused on developing teachers' pedagogical and digital competences for integrating plurilingual virtual exchanges (PVEs) in primary and secondary school contexts. As part of this module, participating teachers co-designed and implemented a six-month PVE project between two primary EFL classes in Germany and Italy. The exchange was thematically framed around fairy tales, providing a familiar narrative context through which young learners could express their ideas and cultural perspectives. A PVE, as conceptualized here, deliberately invites learners to mobilize their full linguistic and cultural repertoires to accomplish communicative tasks (Cutrim Schmid, Cvetkovic Kienle & Şahin, 2023). Through a series of synchronous and asynchronous technology-mediated tasks, learners engaged in authentic communication, collaborated on digital artifacts, and built personal connections with their peers. Data from teacher interviews, learner questionnaires, and focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), following their six-step framework for identifying and interpreting recurring patterns across the dataset. This systematic approach provided a comprehensive understanding of how pedagogical design and facilitation can enhance learners' plurilingual awareness and engagement in VE environments. Findings indicate that explicitly valuing and integrating learners' linguistic diversity not only fostered their plurilingual competences but also strengthened their motivation and sense of ownership in VE tasks. The paper concludes with research-informed recommendations for educators seeking to design and implement plurilingual VEs that prepare learners to participate actively and confidently in today's multilingual and multicultural communicative contexts.

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Becoming Readers Across Languages: a Shared-Reading intervention with Preschoolers from migrant families

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University of Verona

Our presentation will describe an experimental intervention aiming to support the linguistic and literacy development of preschool dual-language children. The project promotes shared reading activities with families from migrant backgrounds and fosters their participation in the city's cultural facilities, particularly public libraries, in order to enhance their access to books and reading opportunities.

The intervention is grounded in Dialogic Reading, an evidence-based approach that engages adults as active conversational partners who foster children's comprehension through structured dialogue around storybooks (Whitehurst et al., 1988). The program implements the core principles of Dialogic Reading, including (i) attention to the child's interests, (ii) the use of differentiated and developmentally appropriate questioning techniques, (iii) linguistic scaffolding strategies that facilitate comprehension and expression, (iv) positive feedback aimed at fostering motivation and communicative participation. Dialogic Reading has been shown to effectively promote a range of linguistic and extralinguistic skills in dual-language children, particularly those from migrant backgrounds (Roberts 2008; Aarts et al. 2016; Grøver et al. 2020).

The project was implemented in two public libraries in Verona (Italy) and consisted of 16 small-group sessions (over eight weeks) for children aged 3–6. Parents or caregivers were also involved and encouraged to engage in the modelled dialogic reading practices. Each session followed a consistent structure:

interactive shared reading of a book led by a trained researcher; a short linguistic elaboration activity targeting specific lexical items or fostering metalinguistic awareness through interaction and games; guided parent-child reading time, which participants were encouraged to continue at home.

Caregivers were invited to use the language they felt most comfortable with, preferably their home language, to support children's development of Italian, while maintaining a positive relationship with their family language. Books were carefully selected for their linguistic, narrative, and cultural relevance, with preference given to repetitive or rhyming texts and culturally diverse picture books reflecting the heritage cultures represented in the group.

To assess the intervention's effectiveness, children were tested before and after the program on lexical, morphosyntactic, textual, and metalinguistic skills; their language exposure and attitudes toward reading were also measured.

Although data collection is currently still ongoing, the preliminary results will be available by the time of the conference; specifically, the presentation will illustrate the structure of the intervention, the materials used, procedures ensuring reliability across sessions, and the outcomes observed in children's motivation and linguistic growth, as well as feedback from families and educators.

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Negotiating language boundaries: Young multilingual children's voice on language use, motivation, and well-being in school

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Multilingual children growing up in monolingual school systems must constantly navigate complex language expectations. These learners are often expected to use only the instructional language at school, with their home language frequently overlooked or even restricted (Kaveh & Lenz, 2024). Understanding potential affective and motivational consequences of rather restrictive language environments is crucial (Veerman et al., 2025). This presentation gives voice to 37 young learners (Mage = 7.34) who speak mainly Turkish at home and are enrolled in Dutch-medium elementary education in Flanders, Belgium. Through child-friendly focus group discussions, we explored when, where, and why these children use their languages. Drawing on self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), we examined how these language practices relate to their experiences of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Transcripts of the focus groups were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Our findings reveal that the emergent bilingual children experience clear boundaries regarding which languages are considered appropriate in different school contexts. Their motivation to learn and use Dutch ranged from externally regulated (e.g., to meet expectations or avoid negative consequences) to more personally endorsed reasons, like relevance or social connection. In contrast, motivation to use their home language, Turkish, was typically more autonomous, rooted in identity, social relationships, and enjoyment. While many children followed dominant language norms, especially in the classroom, they also expressed limited autonomy over their language choices. This lack of choice, combined with feelings of reduced competence in Dutch, can hinder their motivation and overall well-being in school. Some children, however, questioned the language rules, negotiating for more agency and fairness in how language norms were applied. These results underscore a tension between the demands of monolingual schooling and children's needs to express their full selves. We argue for more responsive and inclusive language policies that support linguistic diversity, and in this respect also children's emotional well-being, and motivation to participate in school.

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Kaveh, Y. M., & Lenz, A. (2024). "I'm embarrassed and scared to speak a different language": The complex language beliefs and emotions of bi/multilingual children of immigrants in monolingual US schools. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(7), 2683-2700.

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“You gotta learn what you gotta learn”: Young learners’ and teachers’ perceptions about explicit grammar teaching in the EFL classroom

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During the last couple of decades, an increasing number of policymakers have favoured input-based instruction and more implicit approaches to teaching in the Primary school classroom, emphasising the importance of communication and meaning. In this regard, the role of explicit grammar instruction within these contexts remains contested, particularly for younger learners. While recent studies have found positive effects for these pedagogical sequences on the learners’ performance, little is known yet about how these pupils perceive such interventions.

This study investigates the attitudes of 154 eleven-year-old EFL learners and their teachers towards explicit grammar instruction. This study was conducted as part of a larger project within a task-based language teaching (TBLT) framework in two schools that followed the same Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) programme in northeastern Spain. Half of the participants (N = 79) received targeted metalinguistic lessons, while the other half (N = 75) engaged in procedural task repetition. Data were collected through pre- and post-test questionnaires and three separate structured focus-group interviews with students in the experimental (N = 16) and the control groups (N = 12) and their teachers (N = 3). Results revealed no significant differences in perceptions between the two groups, suggesting that young learners’ openness to explicit instruction may not depend on pedagogical exposure alone. Notably, even learners who demonstrated limited English proficiency expressed a consistent predisposition towards metalinguistic instruction, perceiving it as an essential tool for making sense of linguistic patterns. This preference persisted despite teachers’ predictions that certain students would find grammar ‘overwhelming’, suggesting a misalignment between pedagogical assumptions and actual learner needs. In this regard, qualitative findings highlighted contextual factors such as prior learning experiences and teacher rapport as key influences on learners’ willingness to engage with grammar rules. Teachers, meanwhile, expressed cautious optimism about CLIL programmes and TBLT but emphasised the need for balance with communicative practice. These findings contribute to ongoing debates about the role of explicit grammar in child EFL contexts, underscoring the interplay between pedagogy, learner attitudes, and contextual variables in the Primary school environment.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

Kaveh, Y. M., & Lenz, A. (2024). “I’m embarrassed and scared to speak a different language”: The complex language beliefs and emotions of bi/multilingual children of immigrants in monolingual US schools. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(7), 2683-2700.

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Young EFL learners' perceptions of importance of extramural English activities and their EFL achievement

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The relationship between young learners' informal and daily contact with English and their achievement throughout primary education is context-bound but under-explored (e.g., Muñoz, Cadierno & Casas, 2018; Schurz & Sundqvist, 2022). This presentation reports on findings from a project grounded in the sociocognitive approach to SLA (e.g., Atkinson, 2014). It is about young Croatian EFL learners' external environment, variability in their school achievement and English language proficiency. Hence, the study explores the relationship between EFL learners' perceptions of importance of extramural opportunities for exposure and use of English outside of their school environment and their English language achievement. After six years of formal study, a stratified sample of students (N = 195) completed a survey about perceptions of importance of a range of extramural activities (e.g., watching subtitled broadcasts, social networking, singing in English, gaming, etc.) for their EFL proficiency and school achievement (5-point Likert scale, from unimportant to very important). The survey was based on items from the questionnaire by De Wilde, Brysbaert and Eyckmans (2019) which was expanded for the purpose of this study. In addition, the participants took Cambridge A2 level test in listening, reading and writing in English. The analysis of importance the participants attributed to different sources of extramural contact with English and comparisons between different proficiency groups (high, medium and low achievers) contribute to discussions about importance of out-of-school English and diversity in learner proficiency found in EFL classroom contexts. The findings of the study are also interpreted with reference to participants' perceptions of their formal and non-formal experiences with English. Thus, implications of the study findings for EFL learning in formal contexts are discussed.

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Benefits of co-creating a language intervention: assessing the acceptability, feasibility, appropriateness and perceived measures of learning of the MultiModal Narrative Newcomer intervention

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Young migrants in Catalonia often attain higher proficiency in Spanish than in Catalan, despite the latter being the main language of schooling (Statistical Institute of Catalonia, 2020). This highlights the need for evidence-based interventions that promote Catalan language acquisition, as limited proficiency in this language may hinder academic achievement (see Nusche, 2009, for a review). A strategy for developing such interventions involves a participatory-based approach grounded in implementation science, since early stakeholder engagement enhances both the effectiveness and sustainability of the intervention (e.g., Gallagher et al, 2023).

This study has two main aims: a) to assess the pilot implementation outcomes (i.e., acceptability, feasibility and appropriateness) of the MultiModal Narrative-Newcomer (MMN-Newcomer) intervention during a co-creation process; and b) to assess implementation outcomes as well as perceived measures of learning after an implementation of the full intervention.

First, 15 primary school teachers working in newcomer classrooms in Catalonia, four representatives of the Regional Ministry of Education, and six researchers participated in four sessions to cocreate the intervention. As part of this cocreation process, teachers piloted part of the intervention and evaluated it using the implementation questionnaires from Weiner et al. (2017). The intervention was found acceptable ($M=4.62$, $SD=0.64$), feasible ($M=4.33$, $SD=0.90$), and appropriate ($M=4.58$, $SD=0.65$). These results served to improve the intervention design.

Building on these results, the full intervention is being implemented in primary schools. To date, 18 teachers, 176 students, and 63 families of these students have assessed implementation outcomes and perceived impact on Catalan skills. Results so far indicate high satisfaction among teachers ($M=4.58$, $SD=0.6$), students ($M=4.43$, $SD=0.88$), and families ($M=4$, $SD=0.2$). Teachers also rated the full intervention as appropriate ($M=4.44$, $SD=0.71$) and implementable ($M=4.45$, $SD=0.67$). Students reported improvements in productive ($M=4.26$, $SD=0.98$) and receptive Catalan skills ($M=4.06$, $SD=0.76$), which were also perceived by teachers ($M=3.8$, $SD=0.76$) and families ($M=4.06$, $SD=1.05$).

Findings from both implementations suggest that the MMN-Newcomer intervention can be effectively integrated into everyday classroom routines, and has a positive impact on students' Catalan learning. The study aligns with the paradigm of implementation science, which emphasizes that interventions should be both evidence-based and adaptable to real-world educational contexts.

Exploring language attitudes toward Catalan among recently arrived primary school children in Catalonia

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Learners' attitudes toward a language have been acknowledged to influence its acquisition (see Khasinah, 2014, for a review; see Lightbown & Spada's 2000 framework). Positive attitudes promote engagement and language growth, while negative attitudes can hinder both proficiency and broader learning processes, such as social adaptation and educational engagement (e.g., Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Gardner, 1985). These effects suggest that language attitudes impact multiple domains beyond linguistic achievement. This study investigates the attitudes of newcomer children in Catalonia toward Catalan, Spanish, and their home language, and explores the factors that foster positive language attitudes and support language learning.

A total of 139 newcomer children, aged 9 to 12 ($M = 10.14$; $SD = 1.19$), participated in this study. On average, they had lived in Catalonia for 1.6 years and all attended reception programs (aules d'acollida). Participants completed an adapted version of the Language Attitudes Scale-Student (Li & Wei, 2022) to assess their attitudes toward Catalan, Spanish, and their home language. Data were collected in person across 12 primary schools, ensuring a diverse sample representing a range of educational and linguistic contexts.

To address the goal of this study, we conducted descriptive and correlational analyses. Preliminary descriptive results indicate that newcomer children hold more positive attitudes toward Catalan ($M = 4.04$; $SD = 0.63$) than toward Spanish ($M = 3.69$; $SD = 0.78$) or their home language ($M = 3.84$; $SD = 0.61$). This may reflect the role of Catalan as the primary language of instruction in schools and the children's participation in programs designed to support Catalan learning during school hours. Correlational analyses showed that exposure to and use of Catalan were positively related to attitudes toward the Catalan language. A Spearman correlation showed a moderate, significant positive association between Catalan use and attitudes, $r = 0.38$, $p < .001$, and a smaller, positive association with exposure, $r = 0.22$, $p < .001$, suggesting that children who are exposed and use Catalan more frequently tend to hold more positive attitudes toward it.

These findings underscore the pivotal role of both exposure to and active use of Catalan in shaping newcomer children's attitudes toward the language. Enhancing opportunities for engagement with Catalan (both within classrooms and in everyday contexts) may foster more positive attitudes toward this language. Such attitudes can support language development, educational adaptation, and social integration, highlighting the importance of consistent exposure to and use of Catalan from the onset of schooling.

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The role of family language background in learners' opinions⁵⁹ towards the appropriate time to start English language teaching

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Early foreign language learning has become established in Europe as part of its key policy of promoting linguistic diversity. In Germany, however, English teaching faces considerable opposition, particularly in educational politics (Wilden & Porsch, 2020). The main reason is that learners in Germany perform poorly in international comparisons in Mathematics and German (e.g. McElvany et al., 2021). Politicians therefore argue for giving priority to German literacy and numeracy as core competences, at the expense of early foreign language learning. This is especially questioned for learners who are multilingual and/or have not yet acquired sound competences in German.

So far, only experts in educational policy and foreign language education, as well as parents, have expressed their opinions on this issue. Yet research shows that children develop metacognitive abilities from primary school age (Flavell, 1979). They can reflect on their abilities and willingness to learn and can often articulate what motivates or overwhelms them. Therefore, it seems sensible to ask children for their opinions as well.

The APPEAL study (Attitudes of Primary School Pupils towards English Language Learning) investigated the attitudes of N = 5,193 Year 3 and 4 learners towards foreign language teaching through a mainly closed-item questionnaire. Learners' language backgrounds were recorded using various items that provided nuanced insights into mono- or multilingualism. Additional variables included grades in German and Mathematics, as well as how much learners like the English language and English as a school subject.

Core results show that the majority of learners prefer an onset of English in either Year 1 or Year 3, while only a small minority wish for the onset to be at secondary school level (Year 5). This preference differs little between mono- and multilingual learners. Instead, learners' self-assessment and attitudes towards learning English and English lessons explain their choices. Those with higher self-assessment and more positive attitudes favour an earlier start. Reported reasons are manifold and include learners' perception of English as a global language and their experience of joy and success in English lessons.

Neither the study's qualitative nor quantitative data indicate that learners' diverse language backgrounds play a significant role in their choice of onset. The findings thus highlight the value of considering children's voices in the debate on early foreign language learning in Germany.

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What diversity? Issues in recognising diversity in primary ELT

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In this talk, I will draw on findings from the British Council-funded Future of English project (<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ces/research/current/futureofenglish>) to explore the extent to which diversity is recognised and addressed globally in primary English language teaching.

I will present survey data collected from local experts in 41 countries globally asking about the extent to which the needs of different groups of children are recognised in primary education by a range of stakeholders. The groups include migrant children, children from religious minorities, children with physical difficulties, children with learning difficulties, while stakeholders are Government authorities, school administration, teachers and parents. The data consist of both closed questions and open comments that shed light on how these groups of children are recognised or why they are not.

I will then focus in more detail on issues around gender in primary English language teaching in the 41 countries through the survey data, together with interview and observation data from teachers in 20 of the 41 countries. Analysing the answers to a series of closed and open survey questions around gender issues, together with comments from teachers in the interviews and observations from the researchers present in classrooms, I will examine not only how gender issues might be addressed in the primary classroom but also how they can often become invisible.

Finally, I consider the extent to which diversity is addressed in primary teacher education and some of the reasons why it is not so widespread and why obstacles still remain.

Young learners' encounters with English in the digital wilds: Contexts, motivations, and the role of multilingualism

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The use of digital media in out-of-school contexts is becoming increasingly relevant for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as English often functions as a lingua franca in digital spaces (Hannibal Jensen 2019: 72). Consequently, many students do not only learn English in formal classroom contexts but also acquire English skills informally in their personal environments. Digital wilds refer to heterogeneous, technology-mediated environments in which learners develop language knowledge and skills through social interaction and communicative practice, thereby extending conventional understandings of language learning (Sauro & Zourou 2019: 1). The relevance of integrating digital media from children's everyday lives into EFL teaching is emphasised in current German primary curricula (KM BW 2025: 4). Previous research has shown that young learners' English skills can benefit from encounters with extramural English (Lefever 2010; Hannibal Jensen 2019). However, to date, the number of empirical studies focusing on young EFL learners in the digital wilds is quite limited, particularly in Germany and with regard to the role of learners' multilingualism. Also, most previous studies were conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to a noticeable increase in gaming along with social media and smartphone use among children (Mesce et al. 2022).

This mixed-methods study investigates (1) the informal digital contexts in which German primary school pupils encounter English, (2) the students' motivations for using digital media in English, and (3) potential differences between monolingual (German as family language) and multilingual pupils. In total, 77 third- and fourth-graders (including 51 multilingual pupils) from German primary schools participated in a semi-standardised questionnaire survey conducted in December 2023 and January 2024. This presentation focuses on the quantitative findings analysed via descriptive statistics.

Results show that a substantial proportion of the pupils use informal digital media in English (either exclusively or alongside other languages). For example, 51% of the children listen to music/radio/podcasts in English, 32% watch English-language YouTube videos, and 31% play video games in English. The primary motivation for using English-language media is the lack of German-language alternatives; however, about one third (particularly third graders) also seek to improve their speaking skills. Multilingual pupils indicated using informal digital media in English on average 21% more frequently than their monolingual peers. Overall, the study underscores that English already plays a significant role in children's private digital media use, especially for multilingual students, which should be considered in the ongoing digital transformation of foreign language education.

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Exploring the Development of Preservice Primary Language⁶² Teacher Identity in Transnational Teacher Education: An Action Research Study

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Exploring language teacher identity (LTI) has been shown to have a significant impact on teachers' performance, teaching quality, internal integrity, and consequently, their overall well-being (Golzar, 2020). This exploration has become even more important as teacher education is becoming increasingly transnational. Many novice teachers complete their training in cultural contexts different from their countries of origin, which can make the process of LTI construction even more challenging, as early language teaching traditions and approaches vary across countries. Nevertheless, many teacher education programmes still focus primarily on equipping future teachers with pedagogical skills and theoretical knowledge, rather than supporting them in constructing and negotiating their professional identities (De Costa & Norton, 2017).

Utilising action research methodology (Burns & Dilitaş, 2024), this study explores ways to support pre-service transnational early primary English language teachers in the process of identity exploration and negotiation. The study is conducted by a teacher educator within an international MA programme focused on early English language teaching, where both pre-service teachers and teacher educators come from different educational contexts. The aim of this action research is to introduce and examine different strategies to support pre-service teachers in developing their professional identities and addressing tensions related to non-nativeness, teacher centeredness, translanguaging approaches, and meaningful language practice when working with young language learners.

In order to find better ways to support students in exploring their identities a variety of interventions were implemented such as: metaphor-based timelines describing their most critical experiences during their teaching practice journeys, individual meetings with the students to let them elaborate on their timelines and experiences, and also peer-mentoring in order to encourage students to co-construct their identities through shared experiences (Kamali & Furkan Alpat, 2025).

This study revealed a strong need to support novice teachers in the process of identity formation, particularly due to the additional challenges arising from the diversity of their educational contexts and the consequent difficulties of integrating their previous experiences with new realities. Moreover, it was observed that while exposure to different cultural contexts throughout their education enriches their professional development, it simultaneously introduces challenges that may affect the construction of their identities.

This action research will provide a better understanding of best ways to support early language teacher identity development. Such insights will enable novice transnational teachers to integrate new experiences more harmoniously, fostering greater resilience and professional agency.

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The influence of pedagogical translanguaging on CLIL young multilingual learners' productive vocabulary: Insights from lexical transfer

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The introduction of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) programmes into regions where the national and minority languages already coexist, as is the case in the Autonomous Community of Navarre, results in multilingual education systems (Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018). The presence of several languages within instructional settings has given rise to innovative educational frameworks such as pedagogical translanguaging, which refers to the activation of “multilingual speakers’ resources” (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021, p. 1) to promote deeper learning of languages and content among pupils. This approach can be particularly useful for facing comprehension challenges by using learners’ L1 and/or L2 as mediators (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). Besides, the use of learners’ whole linguistic repertoire in the classroom fosters a dynamic interplay between languages (Nation, 2022), resulting in “a wider range of lexical and morphosyntactic resources” (Ruiz de Zarobe & Querol-Julián, 2025, p. 80) for multilingual learners to make meaning and communicate more efficiently in the target language(s). The objective of this empirical research study is to explore the effects that pedagogical translanguaging may have on CLIL young multilingual learners’ productive vocabulary across their whole linguistic repertoire. To this end, a lexical fluency task was conducted to analyse the cognates that 6th-grade multilingual learners (n = 12) elicit in response to the prompt Food & Drink in Spanish (L1), Basque (L2) and English (L3/EFL). The participants of the study were CLIL and traditional EFL learners for comparison purposes. The vocabulary output was analysed by using LexPro in terms of the most available words per group produced in the three languages. The results showcased that both learner cohorts primarily relied on their Spanish (L1) lexicon to expand their vocabulary knowledge in Basque (L2) and English (L3/EFL), as over 80 % of the cognates elicited by the two groups stemmed from Spanish (L1). However, CLIL learners outperformed their non-CLIL peers in the total number of cognates produced across the three languages. Additionally, CLIL learners produced the same number of Spanish-Basque and Spanish-English cognates even though Spanish and Basque are typologically distant. Therefore, these findings evince that CLIL learners may develop greater multilingual competence, which helps them overcome their low Basque (L2) vocabulary knowledge through positive translanguaging or metalinguistic strategies.

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Writing in CLIL Primary Education: Insights from a Trilingual Context

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Many students worldwide are enrolled in multilingual education programmes, such as CLIL, where they learn content in a language that is not their LI. Recent publications have broadened theoretical and pedagogical perspectives on CLIL (Ball & Kelly, 2016; Coyle et al., 2023; Banegas & Zappa-Hollman, 2023; Codó, 2022), but little empirical evidence exists on how CLIL shapes multilingual writing in specific multilingual educational contexts. In addition, although research in multilingual education emphasises the importance of addressing all the languages of the curriculum to promote linguistic transfer and third language acquisition (Lorenzo & Trujillo, 2017; Safont, 2024; Cenoz & Gorter, 2025), further research is needed to understand how CLIL programmes are implemented in third language contexts, where CLIL programmes coexist with two official languages. From this perspective, this study investigates students' writing in a third language context. More specifically, it examines students' communicative appropriateness in Catalan, Spanish, and English, exploring to what extent CLIL, bilingualism, and stakeholders' perceptions have an impact on students' writing. A total of 392 Year-6 students from three representative schools in the Valencian Community participated. Data were collected through a written task on the water cycle, completed in the three languages, and a questionnaire, adapted from Lasagabaster and Huguet (2007) on language attitudes and out-of-school exposure. Written texts were analysed quantitatively using an analytic rubric that assessed the pragmatic, textual, and linguistic dimensions of communicative appropriateness (adapted from Kuiken & Vedder, 2017; Jacobs et al., 1981). Quantitative analyses were complemented by qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews with teachers and families. Results revealed strong cross-linguistic interdependence: students who perform well in one language tend to transfer discourse and lexical strategies to the others. However, language at home and perceived language prestige mediate these effects. In addition, stakeholders expressed both enthusiasm and concern about CLIL implementation, highlighting tensions between language balance and content mastery. Considering these findings, the study proposes some pedagogical tools designed to make CLIL more inclusive, effective, and responsive to the realities of third language educational contexts.

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Planning the Unplannable (?) - A Case Study on Professional Task Planning for Diverse Learners in Primary EFL

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In increasingly diverse societies, an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching that effectively addresses learners with diverse interests, abilities and needs has become a defining challenge of the field. Two strategies in particular are widely acknowledged to serve this purpose: adaptivity, understood as top-down differentiation based on learners' (individual) needs (Tomlinson, 2014; Tomlinson et al., 2003), and task orientation, which promotes bottom-up differentiation through the use of open-ended, focus-on-meaning tasks (Ellis et al., 2020). Both strategies echo in educational policy frameworks and teacher education programs in Germany, yet this curricular anchoring cannot be taken as evidence of classroom reality. Ultimately, it depends on teachers' knowledge, but even more their ability and willingness to apply these strategies within their daily practice.

This presentation focuses on task planning and introduces a newly developed multidimensional competence model (Haase, in preparation) that uses a teacher's reflective processes within the planning situation as access to competence, building on the premise that reflection holds potential to mediate between a person's knowledge, attitudes and actions (Farrell, 2022; Farrell & Farrell, 2025; Gerlach, 2022; Korthagen, 2014)

The practical application of the model will be demonstrated alongside an exemplary case of one German primary EFL teacher, who was invited to reflect on a task planning vignette based on an authentic textbook activity. The written reflection was then examined using qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023) alongside the task planning competence model, following four indicators of reflectivity serving as main categories:

What reflective depth does the teacher reach when planning a task? (Reflective depth); To what extent does the teacher draw onto professional knowledge when planning a task? (References to knowledge); To what extent does the teacher show awareness of their subjectivity when planning a task? (References to self); To what extent does the teacher take external perspectives into account when planning a task? (References to others involved)

Thus, it is exemplified how the model allows for a differentiated and communicable display of a person's task planning competence, highlighting their strengths, but also exposing blind spots and revealing concrete, tangible opportunities for professional growth. The successful small-scale use of the model offers promising perspectives for its broader application in competence assessment and teacher education to both capture and foster primary EFL teachers' professional task planning for diverse EFL classrooms.

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Act it Out: Inclusive Early Language Learning Approaches with Drama

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Young learner classrooms in Baden-Württemberg, Germany are often diverse. English teaching in primary schools is limited to one and a half hours a week. In this time learners are expected to develop their language skills to A1 level (CEFR). It can be challenging for teachers to help mixed-ability learners from different backgrounds to develop their speaking skills in a short time. In addition, learning to speak is a complex process.

This research project explored whether drama based on picturebooks had the potential to help mixed-ability learners to develop their speaking skills and in what ways. Four picturebooks were dramatised during the intervention with 9–10-year-old learners in the final class of primary school in four different schools. During group work, learners created their own dramatisations based on the picturebooks. They were given prompts as scaffolding to help with speaking, but they also added their own ideas. After the preparation phase, the groups showed what they had created to the rest of the class. Learners could participate in a variety of ways, either with a large or small speaking part or by joining in with the actions.

A mixed method approach to the research was taken in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected and later merged to draw inferences about the development of learners' speaking skills. Before and after the intervention learners were recorded talking to the researcher about some pictures. The recordings were transcribed and analysed using speaking descriptors and a POS tagger. The results were statistically analysed using SPSS to find out how learners' speech had developed during the intervention. In addition, learners were observed in the classroom during picturebook story reading sessions, doing group work and drama. The observations on speaking skills were recorded in a journal by the researcher and analysed using MAXQDA.

The results indicated that learners had reached different stages in their EFL speaking abilities at the start of the intervention. The quantitative results from the post assessment indicated that the intervention helped mixed-ability learners to improve their speaking skills. The qualitative data obtained during classroom observations supported these findings. The use of drama activities based on picturebooks in EFL primary educational contexts can contribute to a more equitable and inclusive learning environment where learners of different abilities can work together and participate in different ways.

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Pedagogical entanglements between teacher education and classroom practice: insights on integrating multilingualism in ELT from the Portuguese context

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The paper is based on an ongoing project that includes teachers' perspectives in two spaces of learning: teacher education and the ELT classroom in the Portuguese context. Like many countries in Europe, Portugal has experienced a sharp rise in migrants and refugees over the last decade (Monteiro, 2025), contributing to highly diverse classrooms. This societal shift reinforces the need for teacher education to include a focus on cultural and linguistic diversity, translingual strategies, and inclusive practices (Ibrahim, 2023; Lorenz et al., 2021). Foregrounding teachers' voice and agency, this paper analyses the changing attitudes and shifting perspectives of Portuguese in-service teachers after attending a 15-hour Multilingualism and Plurilingual Practices course. The study included 52 teachers who attended one of the four professional development sessions, offered online and in-person, in 2024 and 2025. The study explores the impact of this CPD opportunity on the teachers' perceptions of teaching English in multilingual/multicultural classrooms, their evolving identities as multilingual educators, and their willingness to incorporate more inclusive practices.

This paper focuses on the results of the post-course online questionnaire and interviews with teachers. The aim was twofold: 1) to ascertain teachers' shifts in perspectives and 2) to identify the multilingual activities they incorporated and adapted in their respective classes and the reasons for their choices. The study employs a mixed methods approach where quantitative data is analysed qualitatively via thematic analysis. Initial findings suggest that teachers became more aware of multilingualism as a personal and professional resource. They were also more willing to substitute the English-only approach with flexible language practices, such as translanguaging, and felt less guilty about integrating Portuguese. Some also reported purposefully engaging with children's home languages. However, teachers also report challenges in maintaining the multilingual momentum amid daily responsibilities, yet all acknowledge having integrated multilingual activities after attending the course.

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University students and young learners co-constructing meaning across cultures online: A multimodal analysis of an Italo-Japanese English language exchange

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In today's increasingly digital and interconnected world, developing young learners' communicative, interactional, and intercultural competence has become a central aim of language education. While the notion of communicative competence has its roots in the work of Hymes (1972) and Canale & Swain (1980), more recent scholarship has underscored the importance of interaction within this framework (Celce-Murcia, 2007). Scholars have emphasised that interactional competence involves the co-construction of meaning through the strategic use of socio-semiotic resources (Hall, 1993; Hall, Hellermann, & Doehler, 2011; Young, 2011).

Moreover, contemporary perspectives increasingly conceptualise communicative and interactional competence in relation to intercultural encounters. Within this framework, communication is understood as a dynamic, collaborative, and negotiated process of meaning-making that fosters mutual understanding among individuals from diverse linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds (Culpeper, Mackey, & Taguchi, 2018).

Finally, video-mediated communication and interaction have gained momentum. Meaning making in video communication emerges from the interplay of diverse semiotic resources and practices that are complex, context-dependent, and culturally informed. These encompass speech, writing, gaze behaviour, proxemics, kinesics, and various forms of embodied interaction (Sindoni, 2023). Hence, although multimodal educational resources have existed for a long time, examining multiple communication modes in multicultural online contexts is now more relevant than ever (Gaudin, 2019; Kessler, 2022).

This paper explores multimodal meaning-making in a transnational online project between the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (Italy) and Meisei University (Japan), where mixed-nationality student teams co-taught online English lessons to children in both countries. The project provided authentic opportunities for intercultural communication and use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). Focusing on participants' communication strategies, the study identifies multimodal and culturally aware communicative events across different project stages. Video recordings serve as the main data source, analysed through frameworks including Byram's (2021) intercultural communicative competence and principles from social semiotic multimodality (Jewitt & Henriksen, 2016; Jewitt, Bezemer, & O'Halloran, 2025).

This paper presents an eclectic approach to teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), grounded in established principles and applied within a complex, transnational online setting. The project involved applied linguists, teacher educators, student teachers, and young learners, focusing on developing communicative, interactional, and intercultural competence in an ELF context. Through multimodal and intercultural analysis, the study reveals how participants co-constructed understanding and navigated communication challenges, with multimodality playing a key role in facilitating English use and highlighting cultural dimensions.

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The Role of Extramural English Exposure in Early Language Learning: Evidence from Finnish and Norwegian Fourth Graders

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Extramural English (EE) – learner-initiated informal English activities outside the classroom – has been identified as a critical individual difference variable in developing students' English skills (Sundqvist, 2024). Research has documented positive associations between EE activities and various dimensions of second language development across Europe (Lindgren & Muñoz, 2013; Peters, 2018). However, studies of very young learners remain limited (Gyllstad et al., 2025). This study examines the extent to which EE exposure predicts reading fluency and receptive grammar among fourth-grade learners in Finland and Norway when controlling for cognitive abilities, self-concept, language learning enjoyment, linguistic distance, socioeconomic status, and sex.

We collected data from 507 fourth-grade English learners across 22 schools in Finland ($n = 359$, 18 schools) and Norway ($n = 148$, 4 schools). Separate linear mixed-effects models with school as a random effect were employed for each country. Reading fluency was assessed using the Test of Word Reading Fluency, and receptive grammar using the Test for Reception of Grammar. Independent variables included composite measures of EE use, linguistic distance to English, sex, parental occupational status, language learning enjoyment, self-concept, and cognitive abilities.

The Finnish models revealed that EE use significantly predicted both reading fluency ($\beta = 0.56$, $SE = 0.148$, $p < .001$) and receptive grammar ($\beta = 0.388$, $SE = 0.073$, $p < .001$). Self-concept emerged as the strongest predictor for both outcomes (reading: $\beta = 9.9$, $SE = 2.24$, $p < .001$; grammar: $\beta = 8.93$, $SE = 1.1$, $p < .001$), followed by cognitive abilities (reading: $\beta = 0.59$, $SE = 0.157$, $p < .001$; grammar: $\beta = 0.34$, $SE = 0.078$, $p < .001$) and socioeconomic status (reading: $\beta = 0.168$, $SE = 0.054$, $p = .002$; grammar: $\beta = 0.057$, $SE = 0.027$, $p = .05$).

The Norwegian models showed that EE use significantly predicted reading fluency ($\beta = 0.075$, $SE = 0.272$, $p = .006$) and receptive grammar ($\beta = 0.3$, $SE = 0.1$, $p = .003$). Self-concept was also a strong predictor of receptive grammar performance.

These findings confirm the beneficial effects of out-of-school exposure on literacy and grammar skills in both Nordic contexts. The consistent significance of self-concept alongside extramural exposure and cognitive abilities underscores the importance of learner confidence as a mechanism for language development. In fact, EE and self-concept may be closely associated. Educational stakeholders should leverage students' extramural experiences as pedagogical resources while addressing equity concerns regarding differential access to digital resources across socioeconomic backgrounds.

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Teaching in Transition: Lithuanian Teachers' Views on Their Changing Role in an Immigrant Context

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Lithuania, once mainly a country of emigration, has quickly become a destination for large-scale immigration. In just three years, immigrant children have enrolled in nearly all schools. This change has been driven by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and increasing migration from countries like Belarus and Ukraine. The number of foreign children has risen from 2,000 in 2021–2022 to 15,350 in 2024–2025 [1]. Because there is no unified approach for integrating immigrant students, integration mostly depends on each school's culture and, most importantly, the teachers.

The paper reports on the results of a mixed-method study, whose purpose was to explore how teachers perceive their changing role in multilingual classrooms. The data was elicited by means of surveys of two groups of teachers (N=80): teachers of Lithuanian and subject teachers working with grades 5–8 (ages 11–14) and focus group discussions (N=20).

The findings indicate that teachers perceive their role as that of experimenters, trying out various strategies. Some rely on monolingual methods, such as immersion, while others adopt plurilingual approaches. Many express interest in linguistically sensitive teaching but lack the necessary skills to implement it effectively. Lithuanian teachers' roles have shifted from being knowledge providers in traditionally monolingual classes to becoming cultural and language mediators, experimenting with plurilingual pedagogy, and working collaboratively with other stakeholders involved in migrants' integration. Moreover, subject teachers frequently consider themselves as language educators as well.

Teachers' evolving roles have influenced their attitudes towards equity, inclusion, and intercultural sensitivity. However, many still perceive multicultural classrooms as more of a challenge than an opportunity.

[1] Education Management Information System <https://www.svis.smm.lt/>

Fostering empathy: Picturebooks for multilingual early English language classrooms

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Picturebooks have been suggested as a valuable resource for a holistic approach to early language learning in formal settings: Their multimodal features create access points for understanding, their visual narratives coupled with onomatopoeic and rhythmic language invite physical as well as verbal participation and their storylines can engage very young learners in critical thinking about issues in their immediate environment (Cameron 2001; Ellis and Brewster 2014; Bland 2023). Picturebooks can provide learners with a glimpse into communities and identities different to their own (PEPELT21 2021). If invited to reflect on a character's actions as part of the read-aloud, learners can develop empathy (Valente 2022). Picturebooks therefore afford the cultivation of intercultural awareness, which helps build a nurturing atmosphere among learners in multilingual and diverse early language classrooms. However, the potential of picturebooks can only be tapped into if teachers have the necessary mediation skills, which includes picturebook selection, the orchestration of the actual read-aloud and the organisation of multisensory follow-up activities (Mourão and Ellis 2021).

In this talk, I will explore how teacher educators can prepare student teachers for the challenges of using picturebooks to further language competence alongside intercultural and citizenship education in multilingual and multicultural primary language classrooms. The paper will start by reporting on the ICETEMP project (2024-2027) that is funded by the Erasmus+ programme and brings together teacher educators from seven universities in six European countries to design a module for language teacher education. Continuing the work of the ICEPELL project (2022), its objective is to develop student teachers' skill of using dialogic approaches during picturebook mediation for the development of intercultural and global citizenship education. This presentation will focus on a suggested model for working with picturebooks in primary English language classrooms that has evolved during the project's concept mapping phase, and will also cover picturebook selection as well as the design of the teacher education module.

On the basis of examples that illustrate the diversity of picturebooks in their use of stylistic devices and their appeal for different learner groups, I will discuss how teachers can foster empathy in their learners through picturebooks that highlight common needs all humans have regardless of their diverse backgrounds. Ideas for activities with learners and student teachers, as developed for the ICETEMP project, will be shared.

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The impact of individual and instructional factors on young learners' foreign language learning in low-input instructed settings

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Despite a global trend to introduce languages in primary (elementary) education, in Anglophone contexts schools face considerable difficulties (limited time, low teacher confidence and expertise, limited guidance) in delivering high quality languages teaching at this level. Research exploring young learners' (YLS) linguistic progression in instructed settings demonstrates progress in vocabulary and grammatical knowledge development (Courtney et al., 2017) and in listening, reading and speaking skills (Cable et al., 2012). However, progress is often slow, variable and influenced by the amount and quality of input (Graham et al., 2017). Additionally, our understanding of progression for YLS learning languages other than English (LOTEs) is limited and there has been limited attention on the impact of diverse learner backgrounds (e.g. language background, socio-economic status, special educational needs) on YLS' experiences of language education. Further research is needed to examine in depth the route and rate of language learning for LOTEs, in contexts where teaching time is limited and out-of-school exposure is minimal and to identify the individual and instructional factors that influence linguistic development in such settings.

This paper presents a three-year longitudinal study exploring the rate of YLS' receptive vocabulary, phonics, and grammatical knowledge in French, German and Spanish in England. 2,231 students aged 7–11 from 17 primary schools completed vocabulary, phonics, and grammar tests at three time points (once per year). Data relating to individual learner (language background, special educational needs, socio-economic status) and instructional factors (teacher expertise, teaching time) were gathered. Psychometric test properties (person/item reliability, construct validity) were assessed via Rasch modelling, before linear mixed effects models evaluated the presence and magnitude of longitudinal linguistic progression (receptive vocabulary, phonics, and grammatical knowledge respectively), taking into account fixed (individual and instructional factors) and random effects (nesting of data by class and school). Preliminary findings indicate a significant effect of both instructional factors (teaching time/teacher expertise) and individual differences on YLS' linguistic outcomes. Specifically, multilingual learners tended to outperform their monolingual peers, particularly in terms of vocabulary acquisition. Further, low socio economic status and special educational needs, respectively, were associated with more modest learning outcomes, but nonetheless longitudinal linguistic progression was evident for these groups.

These findings shed important light on the language learning experiences of diverse, under-represented groups and highlight the key individual and instructional factors impacting YLS' development of LOTEs in low-input instructed settings. The findings have implications for effective pedagogies for language learning within such contexts.

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Language education in ECE in Luxembourg: multiple languages, aims and approaches

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Many European countries and regions have implemented policies on early language learning or multilingual education in early childhood education (ECE), but practices vary depending on the context (Platzgummer & Thoma, 2023). In Luxembourg, preschool attendance is compulsory from age 4 and the ECE national curriculum emphasizes the development of Luxembourgish and language awareness. This focus reflects the country's linguistic diversity: in 2024, 31% of children spoke the national language Luxembourgish at home and 21% were born abroad (MENJE, 2025). Since 2017, ECE teachers have also been required to offer three weekly activities in French, one of Luxembourg's official languages. Focusing on specific skills and developing language awareness can seem like opposing ends of a continuum, complicating curriculum implementation. National assessment studies have found low to modest positive correlations between preschool attendance and performance in languages at primary school (Hornung et al, 2023). This raises concerns about the efficiency of language education and asks for targeted initial teacher education and professional development (PD) that help practitioners engage in multilingual education practices and teach in linguistically and culturally responsive ways (Kirsch, 2020).

Our European project AGENTIVE supports teachers through PD trainings and offers multilingual materials. We developed stories and activities to develop language skills, language awareness, intercultural awareness, and early literacy skills. Storytelling is an evidence-based literacy activity shown to promote the development of language skills and pre-literacy skills, that, in turn, predict children's later literacy performance and their general attainment (Skibbe et al., 2011).

Approved by the University of Luxembourg's ethics committee, the present study investigates how ECE teachers interpret the differing curriculum requirements, enact language and literacy practices, and used our materials in class. Data were collected in October 2025 through interviews with five teachers and a survey, and will be analyzed with thematic analysis and descriptive statistics.

Preliminary findings indicate a tension between Luxembourgish-focused and plurilingual approaches. Although all teachers held positive views toward bilingualism, they prioritized the development of Luxembourgish. Planned activities to promote French or language awareness were rare, but teachers noticed that they fostered language awareness informally. When using the AGENTIVE materials, teachers observed children's high engagement in multilingual activities, their language awareness, and their collaborative meaning-making. The findings contribute to our understanding of teachers' challenges and practices, and inform strategies for implementing a plurilingual approach as well as specific languages goals.

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The effect of L1 pre-task planning on young EFL learners' willingness to communicate in L2 during collaborative writing

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This paper analyses the nuanced impact of L1 pre-task planning on the willingness to communicate in L2 (WTC) among young learners (YLS) of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) engaged in a collaborative writing task. In such classroom contexts, L1 use among learners is often observed, although its specific facilitative roles remain underexplored (Martínez-Adrián & Arratibel-Irazusta, 2020). This gap is particularly salient given that L1 use has been shown to be helpful in L2 peer interaction task completion, especially at lower proficiency levels, by assisting learners in managing tasks, addressing grammar, and performing lexical searches beyond their L2 competence (Pladevall-Ballester & Vraçiu, 2020). As suggested by Kim (2019), novice L2 learners may benefit from L1 use during planning to generate ideas and conceptualise thoughts, which subsequently could alleviate cognitive burden during L2 production. This facilitative role of L1 in managing cognitive load during L2 tasks underscores its potential as a strategic resource for YLS navigating complex linguistic demands (García Mayo & Gutiérrez-Mangado, 2020), and enhance their active participation and their readiness to use the target language.

With this in mind, this study examines how planning a collaborative task in their L1 influences YLS' communicative engagement in a collaborative writing task, as compared to planning in their L2. This was mediated by learners' individual dispositions: WTC and Interaction Mindset (IM). While the former describes a learner's intention to communicate in an L2 when given an opportunity to do so (MacIntyre et al., 1998), Sato (2017, p. 250) defines the latter as "a disposition toward the task and/or an interlocutor prior to and/or during the interaction".

Sixty-four participants (aged 11-12) from a semi-private school in Spain completed a questionnaire measuring trait-level WTC and IM before performing a collaborative dictogloss task under three conditions: (1) planning in the L1 (12 dyads), (2) planning in the L2 (10 dyads), and (3) no planning (control, 10 dyads). We operationalised state WTC as the number of words per turn (WPT) and the proportion of L1/L2 use during both the planning phase and subsequent task execution. The preliminary analysis of the data provides insights into the dynamic interplay between individual and contextual factors in shaping learners' willingness to engage in L2 interaction, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how strategic L1 use can empower young learners to overcome linguistic challenges, thereby fostering more effective L2 learning experiences (Kopinska et al., 2025).

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More than stories and language practice: picturebooks as pedagogical tools in pre-service CLIL teacher education

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This study investigates the role of picturebooks in pre-service teacher education for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). CLIL is a dual-focused approach that combines subject learning with language development, guided by Coyle's (2007) 4Cs framework of content, cognition, communication, and culture. While CLIL offers numerous benefits, it also poses challenges for teachers and young learners (YLS), particularly when pupils are expected to grasp complex concepts through a foreign language (FL) (Lyster & Ballinger, 2011). To address these demands, CLIL teachers require subject knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and reflective practice, making their preparation both essential and demanding (Pérez Cañado, 2018). For student teachers (STs), who often struggle to grasp CLIL principles and apply them in classroom practice (Banegas et al., 2025; Seguí, 2020), picturebooks can serve as stepping stones, enabling them to design lessons that are academically purposeful yet learner-centered, engaging, and motivating. Despite their recognized value in early English language teaching (Mourão, 2015), little is known about how picturebooks can be systematically integrated into teacher education, and many programs seem to lack structured approaches for doing so (Bland, 2019; Copland et al., 2024). In particular, their role in preparing future CLIL teachers remains underexplored (Can & Durmaz, 2022).

Addressing this gap, the present study draws on multiple datasets collected during two courses in a CLIL primary teacher training program in Germany that incorporated picturebooks. It examines how picturebooks were introduced to promote CLIL, how STs (N = 27) implemented them in two subsequent CLIL projects with primary school pupils (N = 80), and how they reflected on their use.

A mixed-methods design combined questionnaires, focus groups, classroom recordings, field notes, and analysis of STs' term papers. Qualitative findings highlighted the multimodal benefits of picturebooks and their capacity to integrate language and content learning, while also revealing challenges such as text selection, linguistic adaptation, and time management. Quantitative results indicated significant gains in STs' knowledge and skills, particularly in storytelling, activity planning, and incorporating cultural content. Overall, the study demonstrates that picturebooks can enhance CLIL teacher training by fostering pedagogical confidence and supporting the integration of content, language, and culture.

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Developing teacher understanding of input-based tasks in Japanese elementary English education

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Japan's recent curriculum reforms introduced English as a foreign language (FL) "activities" in Grades 3-4 and as a formal subject in Grades 5-6, typically taught by homeroom teachers with occasional support from assistant language teachers (MEXT, 2017, 2020). Despite a policy emphasis on communication, classroom practice often remains textbook-driven, constrained by time, low learner proficiency, and teachers' limited confidence in communicative or task-based approaches (Harris, 2016, 2018; Ikeda et al., 2017). Full implementation of task-based language teaching (TBLT) thus appears unrealistic in this context. Input-based tasks, where learners process listening and reading input with light, purposeful output, offer a feasible alternative for young beginners (Ellis, 2020; Shintani, 2014). Yet little is known about how teachers understand and adopt them.

A six-month pilot study with one elementary teacher explored this issue through workshops, observations, interviews, and pre-/post-questionnaires. Findings indicated limited baseline knowledge and a tendency to equate tasks with drills, but gradual recognition of task features, improved reflective capacity, and higher learner engagement. Challenges persisted, including blurred distinctions between drills and tasks and uncertainty about meaningful input, underscoring the need for broader teacher development.

To extend these insights, a needs-analysis survey with around 80 primary teachers examined current practices in input-focused instruction, such as the types of input activities used, how often students are exposed to input before producing output, and challenges with English-only instruction. Results from the pilot and survey informed the design of a professional development program on input-based tasks, currently being implemented with five elementary teachers from diverse roles and backgrounds.

This semester-long, classroom-based intervention supports teachers in integrating input-based tasks into English lessons. It follows a three-phase cycle: (1) pre-intervention with baseline questionnaires, initial observations, and orientation workshops; (2) intervention combining observation, reflection, seminars, and collaborative task analysis and design, during which teachers trial input-based tasks in their classrooms with research team support; and (3) post-intervention with follow-up observations, interviews, and a questionnaire to assess longer-term change. Grounded in sociocultural principles of teacher education (e.g., Lantolf & Esteve, 2019), the project seeks not only to provide strategies but also to challenge and reshape teachers' beliefs, creating a mediational space for reflection, articulation of assumptions, and gradual appropriation of task-based pedagogy.

At the conference, we will present pilot findings, survey results, and emerging outcomes from the intervention, contributing to a design-based approach to context-responsive, classroom-embedded TBLT for young learners.

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Self-Concept Development in Children with Speech and Anxiety Disorders Learning English as a Foreign Language

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This paper explores the emergence and development of young learners' academic self-concept in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during the transition from lower- to upper-primary education in Poland. This stage (grade IV, age 10–11) represents a critical educational and psychological turning point, marked by a shift from play-based, integrated instruction to subject-oriented, assessment-driven teaching. Although this transition is widely recognized as demanding, little attention has been paid to its impact on foreign language self-concept in learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The study draws on two case studies: a boy with aphasia and psychomotor disability, and a girl with selective mutism and risk of social maladjustment. A qualitative, multi-method approach was employed, combining an adapted Young Learners' Academic Self-Concept Scale in Learning English, children's visual (auto)narratives, mid- and end-of-year grades, and semi-structured parental interviews. Triangulation of these data allowed a multidimensional exploration of how learners perceive themselves as EFL students and how parents interpret their children's emerging self-concept.

Findings demonstrate that children's foreign language self-concept is emergent, context-sensitive, and shaped by interacting factors such as family background, parental agency, intercultural experiences, teacher feedback, assessment practices, peer comparison, individual learner differences (including SEN), and affective variables such as anxiety, enjoyment, self-regulation. Both participants showed fragile or fluctuating perceptions, influenced by emotional and situational challenges, while parents' observations largely confirmed children's self-assessments.

Building on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Tomlinson's differentiated instruction framework, and the International Classification of Functioning (ICF, WHO), the study proposes a structured pedagogical protocol to support equity and inclusion during transitional stages. Integrating UDL and differentiation enables the identification of digital tools that, in line with the ICF framework, may act as facilitators to enhance performance and engagement.

This research contributes to the underexplored field of EFL self-concept among young learners by offering empirical insights into the ISCED 1–2 transition within an inclusive school system. It emphasizes the alignment of teaching methods, assessment, and parental involvement with learners' developing identities as language users. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of addressing emotional self-regulation to promote greater learner engagement and positive outcomes, even in the presence of SEN.

Ultimately, fostering a resilient self-concept at this formative stage enhances motivation, autonomy, and achievement in language education. By amplifying the voices of children and parents, the study illustrates how supportive, inclusive environments can mitigate transitional challenges and sustain positive learner identities in foreign language learning.

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Learner-Generated Materials and Cognitive Engagement in EFL Writing for Young Learners

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Oral skills are usually foregrounded in young learner (YL) English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction (McKay, 2006), yet research proves no justification for postponing writing development (Glaser & Schrader, 2019). Developing writing in EFL might be taxing for YL who must simultaneously master orthography, grammar, and discourse requirements (Brown, 1994), often leading to negative attitudes towards writing (Boscolo, 2009). While research shows that nurturing functional beliefs about writing, providing authentic tasks, and creating supportive contexts can increase willingness for writing (Bruning & Horn, 2000), existing approaches have primarily focused on cognitive engagement through written feedback. Learner-generated materials (LGM), objects that learners create for self-study and peer-teaching, help learners become more engaged, increasingly autonomous and develop metacognitive awareness (Choi & Nunan, 2022). However, no studies have examined how LGM might support writing development in young EFL learners, particularly in contexts like Norway where schools wish to transition to textbook-free classrooms.

Drawing on engagement theory, which conceptualizes cognitive engagement as the mental effort, strategy use, and persistence learners invest in tasks (Hiver et al., 2021), the paper addresses the following research question: how can LGM be used to increase cognitive engagement in developing writing skills among young EFL learners? A longitudinal qualitative study was conducted over two years with sixteen Norwegian EFL learners (aged 8-10). The paper presents two illustrative cases of reluctant writers, learners who exhibited negative attitudes toward writing and had low task-completion. Data included focus-group interviews analyzed through thematic analysis (Brown & Clarke, 2021) to identify engagement characteristics, strategy use and metacognitive insights (Hiver et al., 2021). Writing samples were analyzed for their language content, with comparison of drafts and final products, measuring fluency through word and clause counts and accuracy through error-free T-units, with assessments calibrated against National curriculum requirements (MER, 2020) and CEFR descriptors (2020).

The analysis is ongoing, but the preliminary results show the following: firstly, both reluctant learners demonstrated an increase in engagement, evidenced by more positive responses to writing tasks and willingness to revise their texts. Second, writing fluency increased, with learners producing somewhat longer texts. Third, writing accuracy showed some gains, suggesting that motivational dimension developed more than formal accuracy. These findings suggest that LGM-based approaches to writing might be used to address affective barriers to writing in young EFL learners. For textbook-free contexts, the results might indicate that LGM can support curriculum goals while fostering engagement.

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Creative approach as ethical praxis in qualitative longitudinal research with children: Ethnographic insights into microethics

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This study seeks to make explicit and analyse participant reactivity in qualitative longitudinal research involving children. Regardless of age, reactivity can occur when participants alter their routine behaviours or thinking in the presence of the researcher. Traditionally, participant reactivity is perceived as a threat to the validity of research findings, with 'good' data being reactivity-free. Recent views recognise that using qualitative data with reactivity may be justifiable, given the adult researcher's awareness of it. How reactivity plays out in ethnographic research involving young language learners remains unclear. Here, I highlight the role of child agency by analysing young participants' ongoing engagement with participatory tools in an L2 motivation study. Analytical attention is paid to critically reflect on the intervening effects of my ten-month ethnographic fieldwork and relationship-building practice with nine–twelve-year-old learners.

I adopted a creative, visual arts-based approach to data collection and interpretation, focussing on how children made sense of language learning motivation over time (Li & Gong, 2025). Specifically, motigraph was utilised to visualise L2 motivation changes, supplemented with bi-weekly focus group interviews and creative participatory tools. A motigraph was a visual data elicitation tool that could be used to self-assess and capture one's perceived levels and temporal dynamics of language learning motivation. Data was generated from a bilingual school located in Mainland China and was then processed on NVivo 12. Via thematic analysis, the 25-hour video transcripts and 258 copies of visual artefacts were approached inductively. I examined the collaborative meaning-making between children and me, as well as among children themselves, who agentively responded to my interview prompts and negotiate power relations turn by turn.

The findings attested to the highly fluid and context-sensitive nature of young learners' L2 motivation. While visualising motivation and making sense of its trajectories, children actively engaged in metacognitive reflections, reinterpreted the motigraph tasks, and appropriated the research activities for addressing their peer culture and immediate social goals. The embodied participation experience itself was found to be fun, motivating, and transformative. I argue it is impossible to research children's motivation without intervention. Despite the inevitability of child participant reactivity, it can be explicitly acknowledged to generate more reactivity-transparent data by resorting to researcher reflexivity. Implications will be explored for practitioner researchers to create conditions for children to self-regulate language learning motivation.

Li, J., & Gong, W. (2025). Engaging young language learners in participatory research: Visual arts-based approach. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 100187.

To motivate or not? Analysing child participant reactivity through a creative, reflexive approach

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This presentation seeks to critically reflect on microethics of conducting qualitative applied linguistics research involving children, aged nine to twelve. Drawing on two qualitative longitudinal studies as examples, we unpack ethically important moments emerging from extended fieldwork. Building on our experiences of using a visual arts-based approach (Li & Gong, 2025), the aim is to contribute to understanding, designing, and appropriating creative approaches as ethical praxis in data elicitation, through the lens of researching with children (Pinter, 2023). The implications also shed light on how an element of creativity and reflexivity may be conducive to collaborating with children as active research participants.

As ethnographers, we both engaged children in iterative rounds of participatory activities over time, up to six and four months in each example study, respectively. Study A visually and reflexively elicited children's spontaneous views on their own language learning motivation changes in group interviews, while Study B invited children to freely draw their e-book reading experiences and perceptions in productive ways. Ethical tensions manifested in the audiovisual recordings of adult-child and children's peer-peer interactions in activities, as embedded in semi-structured individual and group interviews. When analysing the ethically important moments at the micro level, we examined the visual artefacts created by young participants and the transcribed textual data inductively via reflexive thematic analysis. We also took into account the seemingly irrelevant or deviant data that characterised children's spontaneous negotiations of meanings and power relations (Pinter, 2022).

Two themes were identified from the findings, regarding 1) how epistemic and institutional power were externally imposed upon researchers, with children, teachers, and parents inadvertently co-constructing and reinforcing adult authority during the fieldwork; and 2) the way children initiated exclusionary practice towards those who were recognised by adult authority, entailing the ethically problematic dilemma of selection prior to data collection, i.e., who got to be selected as participants? We highlight the complex dynamics among local actors in our particular research contexts, yet propose practical measures to mitigate ethical tensions. This presentation concludes with recommendations for practitioner researchers to adapt creative approaches as ethical praxis from multilayered perspectives, considering the micro, meso, and macro influences on children's voices.

Li, J., & Gong, W. (2025). Engaging young language learners in participatory research: Visual arts-based approach. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 100187.

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Creative pedagogies, rigorous research: Building an evidence base for early language education

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University of Oxford

Creative pedagogies in early language education – encompassing arts-based teaching approaches such as using songs or drama – are widely celebrated for their potential to foster student engagement, fluency, and motivation. Yet despite strong anecdotal support from practitioners (Hamilton & Murphy, 2023; Faitaki & Logan, in preparation), empirical research on arts-based and creative language teaching methods remains limited in its capacity to support practitioners in making evidence-based pedagogical choices to help young learners achieve substantive linguistic outcomes (Hamilton et al., 2024; Faitaki et al., in preparation).

Existing research often lacks robust experimental designs to support causal conclusions. Constructs are defined and operationalised inconsistently, replication studies are rare, and reporting practices seldom enable reuse of designs and materials or synthesis of findings. Consequently, it remains difficult to determine what works for different purposes, for whom, and under what conditions.

At the same time, there are promising signs that arts-based language teaching approaches support students' linguistic development. To begin addressing some of the challenges outlined above, in this presentation we will outline two experimental studies that exemplify more rigorous approaches. The first found that singing, chanting, and reciting stories all supported beginner primary learners' oral French development (Hamilton, 2025). The second demonstrated that participating in drama workshops promoted English as an Additional Language learners' socio-emotional development and communication skills (Faitaki et al, 2025).

Using these studies as examples, we argue that research on arts-based pedagogy must continue to thrive on creativity while also adhering to principles of rigour, transparency, and replicability. This entails pre-registering studies, sharing data and materials openly, and integrating qualitative and quantitative methods into the research agenda. These steps would enable us to investigate not only whether creative pedagogies are effective, but also in what contexts, for which learners, and for what purposes.

Teachers seek not only evidence that creative approaches 'work', but also practical guidance on how to adapt them for diverse contexts, learner profiles, and pedagogical aims (Hamilton, 2025; Faitaki & Logan, in preparation). As we will outline in this talk, by enhancing methodological rigour while responding to practitioner needs, we aim to build an evidence base that is meaningful to teachers, responsive to the diverse realities of early language classrooms, and useful for shaping the future of arts-based language education and research.

Faitaki, F. & Logan, E. (in preparation). Using drama for language development in the primary classroom: Teachers' views on benefits and challenges.

Faitaki, F., Liggins, S., Li, J. & Wu, X. (in preparation). Developing young second language learners' oral language through drama-based activities: A systematic review.

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Exploring Cognitive and Literacy Factors in EFL Vocabulary Growth: Evidence from German Primary Schools and Literacy Instruction Types

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Vocabulary acquisition is widely recognized as a key component of English as a foreign language (EFL) learning in primary education (Meara, 2009; Milton, 2009; Miralpeix & Muñoz, 2018; Nation, 2001). Pinpointing the factors that support second-language (L2) vocabulary growth is essential for informing classroom practice and teacher education. Existing research highlights contributions from cognitive skills such as working memory and phonological awareness (Hopp et al., 2021), as well as literacy skills including reading fluency (Jeon & Yamashita, 2014; Koda, 2005). Phonics-based instructional approaches have been recommended to enhance L2 vocabulary acquisition (Li & Woore, 2021; Mrakar et al., 2024; Mrakar & Schilk, 2025), but systematic evidence for their effectiveness in German primary EFL classrooms remains sparse.

In a longitudinal design, data were collected from 107 German primary school EFL learners. At the beginning of Grade 3, participants completed standardized assessments of nonverbal intelligence, phonological awareness, working memory, and phonological short-term memory. At the end of Grade 3, L2 English reading fluency, comprehension, and spelling were measured. Receptive English vocabulary was assessed at both the start of Grade 3 and end of Grade 4 using the British Picture Vocabulary Scale III (Dunn et al., 2009). During this two-year period, students participated in one of four literacy instruction conditions: phonics, whole word, combined, or no specific instruction. Mixed effects modeling, incorporating random intercepts for class, was employed to identify significant predictors of vocabulary outcomes, and a one-way ANOVA tested differences in vocabulary growth across instruction groups.

The mixed effects model revealed that working memory ($p = .041$), L2 English reading comprehension ($p = .008$), and gender ($p = .002$) were significant predictors of Grade 4 vocabulary attainment, with girls outperforming boys. In group comparisons, the phonics instruction group achieved the largest vocabulary gain ($M = 23.4$), whereas gains in the other groups were markedly smaller ($M_s < 11$), with a large effect size ($\eta^2 = .41$). These findings suggest that phonics-based instruction may substantially benefit vocabulary development in the EFL context and underscore the roles of cognitive and literacy factors in language learning. Practical implications highlight the value of systematic phonics and targeted literacy supports to foster vocabulary growth, and emphasize the importance of considering individual learner differences.

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Comparing picturebook read-aloud practices in primary English classrooms: Insights from Portugal and Slovenia

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Picturebooks have been part of English language teaching methodologies in primary education for over 40 years and are often positioned within the storytelling approach (Ellis & Mourão, 2021) where teachers give picturebook read-alouds to a class of learners. Research into global classroom practices (Copland et al., 2024) suggests that teachers are incorporating picturebooks into their teaching; however, despite some published research involving international projects (e.g., Dagarin Fojkar et al., 2024; Ibrahim & Mourão, 2025), there remains limited understanding of how teachers implement picturebook read-alouds in their practice.

This paper presents findings from a comparative study between Portugal and Slovenia, two countries where English was introduced into the early years of primary schooling around a decade ago, where exposure to extramural English is high, and where picturebooks are referenced in teacher education as pedagogical resources. The study aimed to investigate how picturebooks are used in teaching English to children aged 6–12. Data were collected through a survey and post-survey focus groups. The survey consisted of closed and open ended questions focusing on teachers' attitudes, experiences, confidence, and perceived constraints. Focus groups explored these issues in greater depth, enabling participants to reflect collectively on their classroom practices. A mixed-methods approach was adopted: survey data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, and focus group transcripts underwent thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A total of 277 primary English teachers participated in the survey: Portugal (N=122) and Slovenia (N=155). Most worked in state primary schools as either generalist primary teachers or specialist English teachers. Eight teachers took part in the focus groups. Findings show that most participants, regardless of country, view picturebooks as highly beneficial for their students, but report access to picturebooks and limited class time as significant constraints. Differences emerged in the selection criteria teachers use, the types of picturebooks chosen, and the pre- and post-reading activities designed, as well as in classroom arrangements during the read-alouds. These suggest variations in teaching traditions and teacher education practices between the two countries. A further trend is the expansion of the picturebook canon to include texts that support broader educational aims beyond vocabulary topics typical of primary ELT. Considering these findings, we recommend that teacher education programmes support teachers in selecting diverse picturebooks and designing interactive read-aloud experiences, while ensuring equitable access to texts that promote both language learning and wider literacy and intercultural development.

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Making the Complex Learnable: Indirect Corrective Feedback in the Chilean EFL Classroom

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Despite the well-documented role of written corrective feedback (WCF) in promoting accuracy in second language (L2) writing, the factors that condition its effectiveness remain only partially understood. Existing literature has highlighted the influence of several moderating variables, including the nature of the linguistic target, the degree of feedback explicitness, and the proficiency level of learners. However, many of these dimensions have not yet been sufficiently explored in depth. Most prior research has concentrated on adult populations, typically those with pre-intermediate or higher competence in the target language, leaving the experiences and learning processes of younger learners at lower proficiency levels largely overlooked. This imbalance has created a gap in our understanding of how WCF operates across learner groups with different developmental and linguistic profiles.

The present quasi-experimental study was designed to address this gap by examining the impact of two indirect WCF strategies that vary in their level of explicitness: (1) indirect corrective feedback with localization, and (2) indirect corrective feedback with the addition of metalinguistic explanation (ME). The specific linguistic target under investigation was prepositions of time, a form that has often been considered complex and classified as untreatable due to its idiosyncratic use and variability across contexts. The research was conducted with young Chilean learners of English who possess basic proficiency, offering valuable insights into a learner population seldom studied in this area of applied linguistics.

Findings from the intervention provide several noteworthy contributions. First, the results demonstrate that indirect corrective feedback with localization alone facilitates improvements in the accurate use of prepositions of time, although its effect is significantly enhanced when combined with metalinguistic explanation. Second, the study challenges the long-standing assumption that complex linguistic structures such as prepositions of time are not amenable to corrective treatment, showing that they can indeed respond positively to systematic feedback. Third, the evidence suggests that young learners with low levels of linguistic proficiency can benefit from corrective interventions, particularly when the feedback provided is explicit and offers clear guidance on form and usage.

Taken together, these findings enrich the ongoing discussion on WCF by highlighting how the interplay between learner proficiency, feedback explicitness, and the nature of the target form influences learning outcomes. They contribute to a more nuanced understanding of corrective feedback effectiveness and open avenues for pedagogical applications tailored to young L2 learners.

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Beyond please and may I: The intricacies of young second language learners' views of politeness

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Situated within the small but fast-growing field of young second language (L2) learner pragmatics (Savić et al, 2025; Schauer, 2019; Schauer et al., 2026), this study explores the views of politeness held by Norwegian 7th-grade learners of English in light of the conceptualizations of politeness in the teaching materials they had worked with in their English classes in grades 5-7 (10/11 to 12/13-year-old learners). The dataset consisted of group interviews with 46 Norwegian learners of English in the final grade of primary school (12/13-year-olds), as well as their English textbooks, workbooks and accompanying teacher's guides. Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts and teaching materials revealed that while the input immediately accessible to the learners through textbooks and workbooks presented a static view of politeness (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987), with specific language forms commonly presented as polite, some of the learner interviews revealed much more dynamic and intricate views. Especially interesting were the views of politeness that related to respect for the interlocutor's freedom of choice and to the impact of one's choice of language formulations on the interlocutor regarding the achievement of communicative goals and self-presentation, which clearly transcend what has been offered in these learners' textbooks and what has been identified in previous research with young L2 learners. The findings thus show that instruction about politeness with young L2 learners can be approached in a more nuanced and learner-centered way that builds on learners' complex understandings of politeness developed through their lived experienced and that fosters learner agency.

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The Effects of Feedback on Young EFL Learners' Reading Development in the Digital Environment

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Building on the Simple View of Reading, which posits that reading is the product of decoding and language comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), this project investigates how different types of feedback influence young learners' decoding skills, language comprehension, and overall reading comprehension in a screen media-based environment in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context. A quasi-experimental longitudinal design is employed with 120 young EFL learners aged 11-13 from China. The intervention comprises 30 daily reading sessions. Each day, students read six short chapters (170-190 words each) accompanied by pre-, during-, and post-reading tasks. Pre-reading tasks include form-meaning connection and decoding questions on four target words; during-reading tasks include a comprehension question after each chapter; post-reading tasks focus on morphological forms or contextual use of the target words. After answering each question, students receive one of three different types of feedback, depending on their experimental groups: 1) outcome feedback, 2) elaborative feedback in the first language, and 3) elaborative feedback in the target language.

Pre-test and post-test instruments include the British Picture Vocabulary Scale for receptive vocabulary, the York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension for decoding and comprehension, and a questionnaire for language background, reading enjoyment and reading confidence. During each session, we record the participants' self-paced reading time, reading task accuracy, attempts for trial and error, and error recovery after feedback, while participants complete a questionnaire that captures perceived material difficulty, topic familiarity, and feedback usefulness. The materials and test instruments were piloted with 24 EFL learners aged 11-13 in June 2025, demonstrating strong engagement and task feasibility. The main round of data collection will take place in November and December 2025. We plan to analyse the data between January and March 2026 and present the findings at the ELLRA conference.

Data analyses involve both within- and between-group comparisons. We plan to compare pre- and post-test decoding and language comprehension scores to assess overall gains, examine post-test differences among three feedback groups, and analyse the reading times, accuracy rates, trial and error attempts and error recovery rates across the 30-day intervention to trace developmental trajectories using a combination of general linear and mixed effects models. We also intend to explore whether individual factors influence the effectiveness of feedback. The findings are likely to provide insights into young learners' reading development processes and reading behaviours, and offer practical implications for designing effective, learner-sensitive feedback in digital reading environments.

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Meaning-making and engagement: Young learner perspectives on interactive picturebook readalouds

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A focus on meaning-making and language use lies at the heart of successful English teaching that maintains young learners' motivation (Cadierno et al, 2020; Rixon, 2019). Lessons need to nurture creativity and build on meaningful interaction, rather than language study (Littlejohn, 2023). This way, learner engagement, which is crucial for learning, can be enhanced (Hiver et al., 2024). The term refers to both the quantity and quality of learners' involvement and has attracted increasing attention in recent years (Hiver et al., 2024).

However, Scandinavia studies suggest that initial learner enthusiasm for English as a school subject rapidly decline – a few years into English instruction, many learners feel anxious while others are bored (Fenyvesi, 2020; Hannibal Jensen 2019). Moreover, the use of authentic children's literature with the potential of contributing interesting content while also fostering language development, remains scarce in many educational contexts (Bland, 2023). Although studies report positive experiences from teachers who explore the potential of picturebook use (Birketveit, 2015, Fuchs & Ross, 2022), the voices of young learners themselves are rarely present in academic research.

In response to this gap, the current presentation focuses on the perspectives of learners in year 5 in Sweden (ages 11/12) in relation to picturebooks use in English teaching, and learners' experiences of multimodal meaning-making during picturebook readalouds. A previous study within the same project revealed several benefits of interactive picturebook read-alouds from the perspective of their teachers. They reported that the use of age-appropriate picturebooks increased authentic communication, learner involvement, fostered target language use and were beneficial for mixed-ability classrooms (Nilsson, 2024). To explore the perspectives of their learners, 33 focus group discussions with 98 learners from seven classrooms were recorded and analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

The findings substantiate and expand on those from studies involving teachers, and deepen our understanding of the advantages of including authentic multimodal literature in primary English teaching from the perspectives of those meant to benefit from it. The focus group data highlights how picturebook read-alouds have other affordances to than those of regular coursebooks. Furthermore, through the lense of engagement, it is clear that picturebooks can promote behavioral, cognitive and affective engagement, which run as latent themes throughout the focus group data. The study has clear implications for advancing pedagogy that strives to maintain learner motivation in heterogeneous classrooms.

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Bland, J. (2023). *Compelling stories for English language learners: Creativity, interculturality and critical literacy*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Cadierno, T., Hansen, M., Lauridsen, J. T., Eskildsen, S. W., Fenyvesi, K., Jensen, S. H., & Wieschen, M. V. aus der. (2020). Does younger mean better? Age of onset, learning rate and shortterm L2 proficiency in young Danish learners of English. *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 17, 57–86.

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Littlejohn, A. (2023). Integrating language learning into education in the primary English classroom. In D. Valente & D. Xerri (Eds.), *Innovating practices in early English language education* (pp. 15–36). Springer International Publishing.

- Nilsson, M. (2024). “It’s a teacher’s dream to have something this engaging”: English picturebook read-alouds in upper primary school. *Language Teaching for Young Learners*, 7(1), 62-85.
- Rixon, S. (2019). Developing language curricula for young language learners. In X. Gao (Ed.), *Second handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 277–295). Springer International Publishing.

Learning by Doing and Learning by Teaching: Toward an Integrated Model for Early Bi/Multilingual Education

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The relative merits of naturalistic versus instructed language learning continue to spark debate in language education, particularly regarding optimal strategies for different age groups. Among older learners, educators often question whether explicit instruction in grammar and vocabulary is essential for foundational competence, or whether classroom practices should prioritise rich, communicative experiences, as in task-based, content-based, or communicative language teaching. In early childhood settings, the focus shifts to whether young children should acquire language through naturalistic exposure, structured instruction, or a combination of both.

Early learning environments are frequently lauded for their potential to replicate first language acquisition conditions, capitalizing on routines, repetition, and context-embedded interactions that provide meaningful, tangible opportunities for language learning (Lo Bianco et al., 2019). However, assumptions regarding the ease of language acquisition in young children have been problematized. Research in Irish immersion preschools indicates that purely naturalistic approaches may not consistently yield functional language outcomes (Hickey, 2022), reflecting the complex and multifaceted nature of real-world learning contexts and the importance of utilising 'language-conducive strategies' that scaffold learning (Hickey, 2022; Schwartz et al., 2022).

This study employed an action research design over one school year, structured in three stages. The first stage focused on familiarisation with the learning environment and participants. In the second stage, the researcher implemented an intervention using playful, contextualised, and structured instruction to scaffold language learning. The third stage involved implementation by educators, emphasizing more naturalistic, interaction-based methods. Supplementary data were gathered through observations and interviews at different points to explore the effectiveness of the interventions, the dynamics of teacher-child interactions, and perceptions of learning outcomes.

Findings indicate that instructed learning serves as a critical scaffolding mechanism, providing a bridge from initial unfamiliarity to gradual understanding and functional language use. Structured, playful, and engaging instruction complemented naturalistic learning by equipping children with foundational vocabulary and formulaic language chunks, which could then be applied in contextualised everyday interactions. Effective pedagogy, as highlighted by Lo Bianco et al. (2019), combines direct teaching with guided interactions that support, rather than dominate, children's thinking and learning. Overall, early language learning is most effective when naturalistic and instructed approaches are integrated. The study demonstrates that structured interventions can enhance the effectiveness of naturalistic learning, providing practical insights for designing developmentally appropriate, evidence-based early language programmes.

Hickey, T. M. (2022). Heritage language early years' immersion: Irish-medium preschools in Ireland. In M. Schwartz (Ed.), *Handbook of early language education* (pp. 317-343). Springer International Publishing.

Lo Bianco, J., Nicolas, E. & Hannan, S. (2019). *Bilingual education and second language acquisition in early childhood education: Synthesis of best evidence from research and practice*. University of Melbourne.

Schwartz, M., Deeb, I., & Dubiner, D. (2022). 'When they act, they speak more': Strategies that encourage language production in a bilingual preschool. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 25(3), 800-818.

Education students' attitudes and beliefs towards multilingualism in the school environment

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In today's increasingly multilingual and multicultural educational landscape, teachers are expected to effectively engage with learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds while fostering inclusive and supportive learning environments. This is becoming increasingly evident also in Slovenia, where kindergarten groups and primary school classes are growing in both cultural and linguistic diversity. For teachers, this development highlights the need to cultivate cultural and linguistic sensitivity, along with plurilingual and multilingual competences. A key factor in this process lies in teachers' own attitudes and beliefs towards multilingualism, as these can significantly influence how linguistic diversity is perceived and valued within the classroom. Understanding the perspectives of future teachers on multilingualism is therefore crucial for developing educational practices that promote linguistic diversity and intercultural understanding.

The main aim of the present study is to identify and explore future teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards multilingualism in the school environment. The presentation will discuss the findings of a survey conducted in November 2025 among 100 Slovenian BA and MA students enrolled in the Preschool Education and Primary School Teaching study programmes. The online questionnaire examines participants' attitudes and beliefs regarding multilingualism in educational contexts, as well as their linguistic backgrounds and personal experiences with multilingual settings. The data collected will provide valuable insights into how future Slovenian teachers perceive multilingualism and how their linguistic experiences may shape these perceptions.

This research forms part of the ongoing Erasmus+ project XXX, which aims to prepare and support teachers for work in linguistically and culturally diverse settings. The project develops innovative, evidence-based multilingual resources designed to foster language and intercultural awareness, plurilingual competence, and early literacy in multiple languages, while also offering professional development opportunities for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

Foreign Language Acquisition in Dyslexic Pupils: Reading and Listening Skills in Bilingual Primary Education

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I-Communitas: Institute for Advanced Social Research

This study investigates the impact of dyslexia on early language acquisition in bilingual educational settings. While research on dyslexia in the first language (L1) is extensive, its effects on the acquisition of a foreign language (FL) remain limited, particularly in Spain, where bilingual programmes have expanded rapidly. Understanding how dyslexic learners develop receptive skills in two languages is essential for promoting inclusive and effective bilingual education from the early years of schooling.

A total of 781 pupils from 11 bilingual primary schools in Navarre (Year 4 and Year 6) participated. All pupils completed eight standardised comprehension tests: four in Spanish (L1) and four in English (FL), assessing reading and listening across two genres (narrative/expository), two question formats (multiple choice/open-ended), and four cognitive skills (location, inference, interpretation, evaluation). Complementary data were collected through questionnaires and interviews with teachers and families to contextualise linguistic exposure and support systems.

Results showed that children with dyslexia scored lower than their peers in both reading and listening in both languages, with a significantly wider gap in FL. This suggests that dyslexic difficulties interfere more strongly with foreign-language processing during the early stages of FL acquisition. Dyslexic pupils achieved better comprehension in narrative texts, while typically developing children showed marked progress in expository comprehension with age, consistent with curricular expectations. Regarding question types, dyslexic pupils performed better on multiple-choice questions in FL but achieved relatively stronger results on open-ended questions in L1. Analyses by cognitive skill showed consistent deficits across all skills in FL, whereas in L1, their performance was occasionally comparable to that of their peers, indicating differences in strategies between L1 and FL.

These findings suggest that bilingualism does not appear to confer clear compensatory advantages for dyslexic learners at this stage of schooling, contrasting with prior evidence proposing cognitive benefits of bilingual experience (Bialystok et al., 2014; Kroll & Bialystok, 2013; Hansen et al., 2017). Instead, our results indicate that, at this point in their educational trajectory (Year 4 and Year 6), dyslexic pupils' English receptive development lags behind their Spanish performance, suggesting that dyslexia constrains early FL receptive development, particularly in reading and listening comprehension.

The study highlights the importance of evaluating and supporting dyslexic children in both languages during early language learning to ensure accurate identification and tailored intervention. It also calls for further research on teaching approaches that promote equitable foreign language learning in bilingual contexts.

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Kroll, J. F., & Bialystok, E. (2013). Understanding the consequences of bilingualism for language processing and cognition. *Journal of Cognitive Psychology*, 25(5), 497–514.

Hansen, L. B., Morales, J., Macizo, P., Duñabeitia, J. A., Saldaña, D., Carreiras, M., Fuentes, L. J., & Bajo, M. T. (2017). Reading comprehension and immersion schooling: Evidence from component skills. *Developmental Science*, 20(1), e12454.

Researching Early Language and Literacy Learning with Visual Methodologies

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²Universitat Jaume I

³Redanredan Oy

This symposium focuses on visual methods in early language learning research. Visual research methods have proliferated in recent years and applied linguistics is even suggested to have undergone a visual turn (Kalaja & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2018). Visual research methods, such as drawings, photography, painting, comics and collage, fall under broader arts-based research methods (Wang et al., 2017). These visual methods have been used with children (e.g. Prasad, 2021), adolescents and adults (e.g. Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2025).

Visual methods are believed to have several advantages in studying people's lived experiences and perceptions. They are considered to offer participants an alternative and, for some, more natural way of expressing themselves than simply writing or speaking (Dufva et al., 2011; Heath et al., 2009). With young children, visual methods such as 'draw and write' approach, has been found to generate more ideas than writing alone. Visual methods are claimed to be especially suitable for children who have language-based disabilities (Angell et al., 2015).

This symposium explores the use of visual research methods in early language education from the perspective of both students and teachers. Through three presentations, it examines the potential and shortcomings of visual methods in early language and literacy learning related research considering the following questions: How are visualizations used? What is the purpose of visualizations? Which visualizations work best in ELL context? Who produces the visualizations? Are visualizations done individually or in a group? Do visualizations involve the participants' own interpretation produced using other modalities? How are visualizations analyzed?

Angell, C., Alexander, J., & Hunt, J. (2015). 'Draw, write and tell': A literature review and methodological development on the 'draw and write' research method. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 13(1), 17–28.

Dufva, H., Aro, M., Alanen, R., & Kalaja, P. (2011). Voices of literacy, images of books: Sociocognitive approach to multimodality in learner beliefs. *ForumSprache*, 6, 58–74.

Heath, S., Brooks, R., Cleaver, E., & Ireland, E. (2009) *Researching Young People's Lives*. Sage.

Kalaja, P., & Pitkänen-Huhta, A. (2018). ALR special issue: Visual methods in applied language studies. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 9(2–3), 157–176.

Kalaja, P., & Melo-Pfeifer, S. (2025) (Eds.). *Visualising Language Students and Teachers as Multilinguals. Advancing Social Justice in Education*. Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Prasad, G. (2021). Reframing expertise: Learning with and from children as co-investigators of their plurilingual practices and experiences. In K. Kuchah & A. Pinter (Eds.), *Ethical and methodological issues in researching young language learners in school contexts* (p. 106–125). Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Rose, G. (2016) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials (4th edn)*. Sage.

Wang, Q., Coemans, S., Siegesmund, R., & Hannes, K. (2017). Arts-based methods in socially engaged research practice: A classification framework. *Art/Research International: An International Journal*, 2(2), 5–39. <https://doi.org/10.18432/R26G8P>

Narrative development of heritage Russian multilingual children in Catalan-speaking territories of Spain

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Multilingual children constitute a highly heterogeneous group, both in their language learning environments and individual linguistic abilities, an aspect that has yet to be thoroughly studied and understood. This study analyzes the development of narrative skills, considered a comprehensive measure of oral competence, as they reflect both grammatical skills and the complexity of language use in real contexts (Botting, 2002). Furthermore, oral narrative skills are a key indicator for predicting the development of other areas of language and academic performance, including literacy (Dickinson & McCabe, 2001). We investigate the variability in narrative skills among heritage multilingual children of preschool and pre-adolescent who have Russian as their heritage language and Spanish and Catalan as societal languages.

To elicit narratives in the three languages, the Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives (MAIN; Gagarina, Klop et al., 2019) was used, a task specifically designed to study narrative skills in multilingual children, widely used in the field of language acquisition and available in Russian, Catalan, and Spanish. We used standard coding of narrative structure (0–17), narrative complexity (0–3), narrative comprehension (0–10) and calculated the number of mental state words used in the narratives. In addition, linguistic background information was collected via Q-BEx questionnaire (De Cat et al., 2025) filled out by parents.

A total of 79 children (44 girls and 35 boys, Mage = 7;8, SD = 2;7, age range = 3;0–13;6) participated in the study. All participants were Russian–Catalan–Spanish multilinguals and come from Catalan-speaking territories of Spain, Catalonia and Mallorca. A total of 237 narratives (79 participants x 3 languages) were elicited. The coding of the narratives is ongoing.

Preliminary results show high intra-speaker variation, as well as inter-speaker differences in both narrative structure scores and complexity, depending on the language in which the narrative is produced. Moreover, preliminary results (scorings of Russian narratives available for 37 children) showed no correlation between narrative and Q-BEx scores, which may be tentatively related to a high variation in language proficiency and narrative scores observed in our data. However, it is necessary to complete the scoring of the remaining participant's narratives to draw firm conclusion on the link between narrative and language background measures. In summary, the study of multilingual children's narratives allows us to identify patterns of language acquisition and contributes to emerging research on individual differences in the development of multilingual children.

Botting, N. (2002). Narrative as a tool for the assessment of linguistic and pragmatic impairments. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 18(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1191/0265659002ct224oa>

De Cat, C., Gusnanto, A., Kaščelan, D., Prévost, P., Serratrice, L., Tuller, L., & Unsworth, S. (2025). How detailed do measures of bilingual language experience need to be? A cost–benefit analysis using the Q-BEx questionnaire. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728925100497>

Dickinson, D. K., & McCabe, A. (2001). Bringing it all together: The multiple origins, skills, and environmental supports of early literacy. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 16(4), 186–202. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0938-8982.00019>

Gagarina, N., Klop, D., Kunnari, S., Tantele, K., Välimaa, T., Bohnacker, U., & Walters, J. (2019). MAIN: Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives – Revised. *Materials for use. ZAS Papers in Linguistics*, 63.

Individual differences in the acquisition of intonation in heritage multilingual children

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Heritage language (HL) speakers are native to their HL (Kupisch & Rothman, 2018) but often display patterns differing from monolinguals. While these patterns have been studied extensively in syntax and morphology (e.g., Polinsky & Scontras, 2020), HL prosody remains less explored (see Pronina & Prieto, 2024, for review in LI acquisition). However, prosody is susceptible to societal language (SL) influence just like any other linguistic domain and HL speakers can be distinguishable by their accent. In this study, we aim to explore the acquisition of intonation and discuss possible sources of individual differences in the acquisition.

We study the variability in intonational phonology in multilingual children of preschool to preteen ages, with Russian as HL and both Spanish and Catalan as SLs and focus on intonation patterns of wh-questions. The differences in nuclear prominence (Spanish/Catalan: rightmost, Russian: flexible), pitch accent realization domain (Spanish/Catalan: prosodic word, Russian: intonational phrase), and question contours among Russian (H*+L L% or L+H* H+L* L%), Spanish (H* L% / L* L% or L* H%), and Catalan (H* L% / L* L%) allow for the detection of potential intonation transfer in heritage Russian children (Duryagin, 2021; Hualde & Prieto, 2015; Knyazev, 2024; Prieto et al., 2015).

A total of 130 typically developing children participated in the study, 77 of them were heritage Russian speakers (42 F, Mage= 7;8, SD = 2;7, range = 3;0–13;6). Age-matched monolingual Russian (N=27, 9 F, Mage= 6;5, SD = 2;6, range = 2;10–13;11) and bilingual Catalan-Spanish control children (N=26, 13 F, Mage=7;2, SD = 2;3, range = 3;6–10;4) were included. To elicit questions, discourse completion procedure was used (APT, Russian and Catalan versions; Pronina et al., 2023).

The results indicated significant individual variation and substantial use of non-standard patterns (34%) among heritage Russian-speaking children. The heritage group showed a decreased use of standard Russian configurations and an increased use of another pattern, possible in Russian but less frequent and more pragmatically specific. Even when standard patterns are produced, they differ from monolingual patterns in phonological details, such as using non-standard H%. These features may indicate phonological transfer from the SLs and show that the cross-linguistic influence is the main source of individual variation in heritage children. The study highlights a distinct developmental path of intonational development in heritage-speaking children and shows the importance of including intonation as an object of study in the field of heritage bilingualism.

Duryagin, P. V. (2021). Intonacija chastnogo voprosa v russkom jazyke: Èksperimental'noe issledovanie istocnikov variativnosti. *Russkij jazyk v nauchnom osveshchenii (Russian Language and Linguistic Theory)*, 41(1), 137–177. <https://doi.org/10.31912/rjano-2021.1.6>

Hualde, J., & Prieto, P. (2015). Intonational variation in Spanish: European and American varieties. In S. Frota & P. Prieto (Eds.), *Intonational variation in Romance* (pp. 350–391). Oxford University Press.

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A Qualitative Study on the Importance of Education for Democracy in Primary Schools in Germany and the US – How (English) Teaching Can Make a Difference

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Education for Democracy (EfD) is an omnipresent part of current educational discourse and a holistic approach to foster morals and competences related to citizenship (Edelstein 2011: 130). These aspects are widely recognized as crucial in today's world, which seems increasingly characterized through political extremism, hate, and discrimination of minorities. As the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) (Council of Europe 2018) shows, democratic competences are related to intercultural and communicative competences and thus, to relevant goals of foreign language (FL) teaching. Primary FL education can initiate the development of political concepts (Diehr 2025: 34). Still, the implementation of EfD in (FL) classrooms in Germany remains limited (Achour 2025: 36) and there is little empirical research on the potential of early FL teaching for EfD.

This paper presents a qualitative interview study with in-service teachers from Germany (n=4, primary English teachers) and the USA (n=4, primary teachers in general). The goal is to explore teachers' perspectives on how (English) teaching can contribute to EfD with young learners. The comparative approach was chosen (1) since the US function as a target culture for EFL teaching in Germany but also (2) based on the question to what extent recent antidemocratic developments in the US are mirrored in teachers' approaches to EfD. The semi-structured interviews were analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz & Rädiker 2022), resulting in the creation of a coding system with 11 deductive and 37 inductive categories.

The results show that teachers from both countries are aware of the relevance of EfD and of themselves as democratic role models. As the participants recognize primary school education as foundational for all future learning, the findings highlight the necessity and potential of starting early with EfD. However, the results also reveal how meaningful implementation is restricted by numerous factors including political and societal tensions, time shortages, or a lack of (pedagogical) content knowledge on EfD and teaching materials suitable for young FL learners. Especially in interviews with US teachers, concerns regarding legal consequences are frequently mentioned and it is displayed how oftentimes, forced consensus is prioritized over productive dissensus. Political education is commonly referred to as a taboo, and teachers prefer not to share their own opinions, even if this prohibits counteracting anti-democratic values or behavior. These circumstances underline the fragility of democracy and the necessity for meaningful EfD once more.

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Global challenges in early language teaching for plurilingual futures

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Teaching early language in diverse global contexts presents a complex set of challenges for educators, shaped by linguistic, cultural, socio-economic, and political factors. This paper explores the multifaceted difficulties faced by teachers in early foreign/second/additional language instruction, emphasising the tension between policy and local language ecologies. Key challenges include insufficient teacher preparation for meeting children's socio-emotional needs and linguistic abilities, inadequately developed age-appropriate language and psycho-pedagogical skills, and policy pressures favouring dominant languages (mainly English) over indigenous or minority languages. Drawing on case studies from both Inner (UK, Canada), Outer (Indonesia) and Expanding circle countries (Kachru, 1985), (Croatia, Germany, Spain, Japan, South Korea), this paper highlights difficulties in shaping the professional identity of the language teacher of children and calls for enhancing professionalisation and empowering teachers with appropriate training programmes that prepare them to work with children's home languages and cultural backgrounds as assets in the learning process. We conclude by recommending pedagogical solutions, which may include CLIL for young learners, telecollaboration to foster intercultural understanding, collaborative task planning to foster grammatical accuracy, and explicit early literacy instruction.

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Immersed in English Beyond the Classroom: An Exploratory Study of Turkish EFL Learners

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In low-input contexts such as Turkey, exposure to English beyond formal instruction can serve as a powerful yet underutilized resource for language learning. Building on Sundqvist's (2009) and Sundqvist and Sylvén's (2016) concept of learning beyond the classroom, and employing measurement frameworks from Muñoz (2013) and Sundqvist and Uztosun (2023), this exploratory mixed-methods study investigates the Extramural English (EE) habits of 39 middle school students (ages 11–14) in a private school in Istanbul. Data were collected through an online questionnaire with Likert-scale items and open-ended reflections to capture both the frequency and perceived value of students' engagement with English outside school. Results indicate high engagement in EE Social Interaction ($M = 4.05$), Music ($M = 3.92$), and Viewing ($M = 3.90$), but limited participation in EE Digital Creativity ($M = 3.26$) and Internalized Practices ($M = 1.40$). Qualitative findings reveal that accessibility and enjoyment primarily drive participation, whereas limited strategic awareness and teacher mediation restrict deeper engagement. Socio-economic background and parental involvement also shape access to opportunities, echoing Sundqvist and Sylvén (2016) regarding contextual variability in out-of-school learning. By situating EE within the Turkish EFL context, the study argues that without pedagogical scaffolding, learners' incidental exposure remains superficial. Integrating guided reflection, project-based EE tasks, and strategy instruction into school programs can help students convert informal engagement into intentional learning. Linking informal input to instructed SLA, this study highlights pathways for fostering autonomy, motivation, and sustained English use across classroom and digital environments. The findings will be discussed based on the current literature on Extramural English and Instructed SLA (Ghamarian-Krenn & Schwarz, 2023; Schurz, 2025).

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Music as a language learning resource: An online program promotes vocabulary development of children with cochlear implants and maternal well-being

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Background: Cochlear implants (CIs) help children with congenital profound sensorineural hearing loss gain auditory access and begin language acquisition, with early implantation being particularly beneficial (Geers & Nicholas, 2013). However, many children with CIs experience delayed language development, and their mothers could report elevated stress levels related to communication challenges and caregiving demands, which can, in turn, affect child outcomes (Continisio, 2023). Research suggests that music can be a motivating resource for both children with CIs and their families, enhancing language development and overall well-being (Torppa et al, 2019; Yucel et al., 2009). However, few home-based music programs have been implemented for very young children in the early stages after CI activation.

Objectives: This study examined the effects of a 12-week online music program for early-implanted children and their mothers, aiming to promote children’s vocabulary development and reduce maternal stress.

Methods: Sixteen children with CIs (mean age = 17.6 months) and their mothers participated in the music program (CI-T group), and sixteen age-matched children with CIs (mean age = 18.5 months) with their mothers received standard treatment (CI-C group). The program began three months after CI activation. All participants were assessed before (T1), after (T2), and six months post-intervention (T3). Child’s vocabulary was measured using the MB-CDI, maternal stress using the Parenting Stress Index–Short Form (PSI-SF), and acoustic environment exposure using CI datalogging.

Results: The CI-T group showed significant gains in expressive vocabulary across all assessment points, while the CI-C group improved only between T2 and T3. Only the CI-T group showed reduced scores on the PSI-SF “Difficult Child” subscale between T1 and T2. Increases in children’s vocabulary were significantly associated with decreases in maternal stress, particularly in perceptions of the child as difficult or the relationship as dysfunctional. Exposure to “speech in quiet” was associated with vocabulary growth and lower maternal stress.

Conclusions: The study suggests that the online music program had a positive effect on both the children’s vocabulary development and the reduction of maternal stress for the group who participated in the program, highlighting the potential benefits of integrating music-based interventions to support children with CIs and their families in the first months after CIs’ activation. Optimal acoustic conditions in the home environment promote mutual influences between children’s vocabulary development and maternal well-being.

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Developing Pre-service Teachers' Understanding of Pedagogical Translanguaging in Early Language Education: A Design-based Study

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This paper reports on a design-based study investigating how pre-service early education teachers conceptualize and apply pedagogical translanguaging when planning English lessons for young learners. Fifty students of early childhood and primary education, enrolled in a university course on English language teaching methodology, took part in the project. After a theoretical introduction to translanguaging, the participants designed classroom tasks and materials that incorporated strategies such as cross-linguistic comparison, code-meshing, and bilingual scaffolding. Their teaching artefacts and accompanying reflections were analysed qualitatively to reveal patterns of pedagogical reasoning and understanding.

The findings indicate a growth in students' methodological awareness and in their capacity to reflect on the new linguistic code through the lens of the language they already know. This process reveals varying levels of translingual awareness: (1) affirmation of the mother tongue, (2) reference to parallels in the native language, (3) reconsideration of similarities and differences between linguistic systems, and (4) higher-order reflection on the interaction of languages in meaning-making.

The project also yielded a collection of model teaching materials for early language education and highlighted challenges such as linguistic insecurity and the scarcity of didactic frameworks supporting translanguaging. The study underscores the value of integrating translanguaging into teacher education curricula to prepare future teachers for the forthcoming reform unifying language education within the Polish core curriculum.

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Long-lasting effects of early bilingual programs? Minority and majority language students' transition from primary school CLIL programs to regular foreign language lessons in secondary schools in Germany

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In Germany, the transition from primary to secondary school poses particular challenges for foreign language (FL) learners due to changes in teaching approaches, assessment practices, and a shift from oracy to literacy. These factors may influence students' long-term FL proficiency and success (e.g., Jaekel et al., 2021). This study examines the linguistic development and attitudes of students who completed a German-English bilingual program in primary school and continued with regular English lessons from grade 5 onwards in secondary school. Particular attention is given to minority language students, who typically learn German as an L2 and English as an L3. As noted by Genesee and Fortune (2014), students from ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds are often viewed as "at-risk" in FL contexts, making this subgroup especially relevant for investigation.

The study addresses two main research questions: (1) Do students' attitudes towards bilingual learning in primary school and English lessons in secondary school differ depending on whether their L1 is German or not? (2) Are there differences between L1 and L2 German students regarding their English language performance in secondary school?

Our sample comprises 500 fifth graders (30% with a minority language background) from more than 150 secondary schools in Bavaria, Germany. Students completed a questionnaire assessing their attitudes towards both bilingual primary education and English lessons in secondary school. Additionally, a subsample of 60 students (30% with a minority language background) was tested on English reading and writing skills using subtests of the Primary School Assessment Kit (Little et al., 2003).

Preliminary findings show that all students, regardless of language background, rated both the bilingual primary program and secondary English lessons very positively. Moreover, L1 and L2 German students performed equally well in English reading and writing tests. These outcomes suggest that students from linguistically and ethnically diverse backgrounds do not necessarily represent an "at-risk" group in FL learning. Rather, they can and often do achieve results comparable to those of their majority-language peers (e.g., Steinlen, 2021).

The findings will be discussed in light of models of cross-linguistic transfer in L3 acquisition, highlighting how prior bilingual experience may facilitate further language learning. Practical implications for teaching and supporting linguistic diversity in FL classrooms will also be outlined.

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Exploring Cognitive and Literacy Factors in EFL Vocabulary Growth: Evidence from German Primary Schools and Literacy Instruction Types

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A persistent monolingual bias and purist language ideology have long privileged (monolingual) native speakers as superior teachers over their multilingual and non-native counterparts (Higgins & Ponte 2017; Pavlenko 2003). While a monolingual teacher is inherently limited to one language, the very concept of the "native speaker" is now being challenged in TESOL. Monolingualism is no longer viewed as the default, and there is growing support for the instrumental use of LI in pedagogical contexts. Despite this theoretical shift, many TESOL settings globally maintain a strict L2-only policy. This often causes teachers to grapple with guilt when they employ the LI during instruction. Based on mixed-methods research, this study investigates the current practices of LI use in the Turkish primary education context. It proposes an evidence-based, comprehensive framework to guide non-native English teachers working with young learners. Triangulated data (Denzin, 2015) were drawn from 310 survey participants, 39 classroom observations, and interviews with four teachers. The analysis revealed that translanguaging is an everyday reality in most classrooms, despite teachers' mixed feelings of regret and contentment. Teachers' negative perspectives toward this practice are influenced by the dominant monolingual establishment and several practical factors, including the children's young age, low literacy, and low proficiency levels. Caught between these conflicting factors, teachers often feel "stuck". This leads to a sense of guilt that is detrimental to their professional well-being. Based on these findings, this study proposes comprehensive guidelines that combine theoretical and practical insights. The aim is to foster a teaching and learning environment where both teachers and learners can freely draw on their full linguistic repertoires without guilt.

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Designing Local Pathways: Collaborative Frameworks for Teaching English to (Very) Young Learners in Brazil

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Across the world, children are increasingly being exposed to new languages, primarily English as an additional language (Pinter, 2017; Johnstone, 2019). In Brazil, however, English language instruction is only mandatory from the 6th grade onwards (Brasil, 2018). Despite this, there has been a notable expansion of English provision in pre- and primary schools. In the absence of official guidelines, these initiatives are often driven by local motivations rather than by coherent linguistic or educational policies (Egido, Tonelli, & De Costa, 2023). Consequently, English classes are frequently introduced as responses to political interests or logistical needs, such as scheduling demands, rather than as part of planned language education policies (Ávila, 2019; Egido & Tonelli, 2025). This policy gap has affected teacher education, as most undergraduate Language and Arts programs in Brazil have not prioritized the preparation of educators for early English teaching (Santos, 2005; Tonelli & Cristovão, 2010). Within this context, proposals for locally designed curricula and collaborative school–university partnerships have emerged as meaningful alternatives to support English language education in municipalities that acknowledge its pedagogical and formative potential (Tonelli, Egido, & Magiolo, 2024; Tonelli, Selbach, & Kawachi-Furlan, 2025). This presentation introduces two frameworks jointly developed within interconnected research projects coordinated by the presenters. These frameworks were constructed with attention to local realities and teachers’ praxiologies (Tonelli et al., 2022; Quevedo-Camargo et al., 2025). The participating teachers, previously accustomed to teaching secondary students, were assigned to early English education without specific training for that context. Recognizing and valuing their daily practices became essential to generate knowledge and foster professional development regarding the teaching of English to (very) young learners. Grounded in focus group discussions (Ressel et al., 2008), specialized literature, and the coordinators’ expertise, both frameworks incorporate stakeholders’ perspectives and promote critical pedagogical approaches (López-Gopar, 2019). These approaches challenge narrow conceptions of teaching a named language and advocate for inclusive, context-responsive practices. Rather than offering prescriptive models, the frameworks serve as flexible guides, allowing for adaptation to local needs and realities. During the presentation, participants will be invited to explore diverse possibilities for visualizing how local curricula can be inspired by these principles. The discussion aims to illuminate ways in which collaborative, critical, and locally grounded frameworks can contribute to more equitable and contextually meaningful English language education for young learners in Brazil.

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Oral Production Outcomes in German-French Elementary School CLIL Programs in Comparison to the Outcomes of Regular Foreign Language Classes

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Previous research comparing oral production in CLIL and non-CLIL settings has yielded mixed results regarding learners' foreign language competencies. Most studies have examined CLIL programs using English as the language of instruction. Several report higher levels of fluency, automation, morphological accuracy, and lexical range among CLIL learners (cf. Eurydice, 2006; Gebauer et al., 2013; Steinlen, 2021; Wode, 2009; Zaunbauer et al., 2012). However, studies on elementary school children have not always found significant CLIL advantages in fluency, interaction, pronunciation, or lexical range (Lancaster, 2018). Some even indicate weaknesses in pronunciation, syntax, informal registers, and pragmatic competences (cf. Dalton-Puffer, 2008; Pérez-Cañado, 2012; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2011, 2015). Beyond program effects, variables such as gender, linguistic and educational background, and affective factors have also been shown to influence learners' achievements in different foreign language programs (Berubé & Marinova-Todd, 2012; Steinlen, 2018).

Given the predominance of research on English CLIL programs, the question arises whether comparable outcomes can be found in CLIL programs using other languages. The present study addresses this issue by investigating oral French proficiency in a Bavarian pilot project (Bilinguale Grundschule Französisch), where French serves as a language of instruction from grades 1 to 4. The sample comprises 189 first graders, 80 second graders, 156 third graders, and 241 fourth graders. Tailored oral assessments measured monologic-descriptive speaking, aligned with DELF Prim and the AI descriptors of the Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues (Conseil de l'Europe, 2021). Two research questions guided the study:

RQ1: Do CLIL and non-CLIL learners differ in pronunciation, lexical, morphosyntactic, and fluency skills across grades 1–4?

RQ2: Does program type (regular vs. CLIL) significantly predict oral proficiency in grade 4 when controlling for linguistic background, gender, educational background, and academic self-concept in French?

Results show that at the end of grade 1, regular-program learners outperformed CLIL learners in all domains. No significant group differences appeared in grade 2. However, in grades 3 and 4, CLIL students outperformed non-CLIL peers in pronunciation, lexical, morphosyntactic, and fluency skills. Regression analyses identified program type as a significant predictor of oral proficiency in grade 4, even when control variables were included. Potential explanations for CLIL learners' initial disadvantages—such as cognitive and linguistic load—are discussed, along with implications for early bilingual education in non-English CLIL contexts.

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Individual differences in phonological skills and their association with grammar and reading skills among multilingual Finnish and Norwegian 4th-grade English students.

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English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction typically prioritizes vocabulary acquisition over the explicit development of phonological abilities (PA). Yet, research consistently highlights PA as a foundation for language development, showing strong links with vocabulary, grammar, and reading fluency[1,2,3,4].

Despite this evidence, few studies have explored individual differences and how PA interacts with other linguistic abilities in EFL contexts among multilingual learners in upper primary school. The present study addresses this gap by examining the associations between PA, grammar, and reading fluency of multilingual fourth-graders from Finland (N = 264) and Norway (N = 125) learning EFL. Three hypotheses were tested: (1) PA predicts both English grammar and reading fluency; (2) individual differences in PA are explained by linguistic distance and cognitive ability; and (3) Norwegian (Indo-European language) students outperform Finnish (Uralic language) students in PA due to the smaller linguistic distance between Norwegian and English.

Analyses involved correlations and mixed-effects models. Results strongly supported H1: PA was significantly associated with TROG in the Finnish ($\beta = 1.26$, SE = 0.15, 95% CI [0.95, 1.56], $p < .001$) and the Norwegian data ($\beta = 0.92$, SE = 0.18, 95% CI [0.54, 1.29], $p < .001$) and with reading fluency in the Finnish ($\beta = 1.87$, SE = 0.3, 95% CI [1.3, 2.46], $p < .001$) and the Norwegian sample ($\beta = 1.15$, SE = 0.5, 95% CI [0.14, 2.16], $p = .026$). H2 was partially confirmed: PA variation was significantly explained by cognitive abilities only in the Finnish data ($\beta = 0.158$, SE = 0.04, 95% CI [0.09, 0.24], $p = .001$), and in both groups by self-rated majority language and English skills. H3 was not confirmed: Adjusted comparisons revealed no significant performance difference in PA between Finnish and Norwegian students.

These findings suggest that PA remains a significant predictor of English grammatical and reading fluency competence among 4th-grade multilingual EFL learners. The comparable PA performance between the Norwegian and Finnish learners indicates that linguistic distance is not the primary determinant of PA abilities. More broadly, the results suggest that embedding PA-focused activities in EFL instruction can strengthen connections between sound, form, and meaning, thereby enhancing grammatical and reading outcomes across diverse learners in upper primary school grades[2,3,5]. Moreover, PA training would allow an accessible instructional approach for all students to engage, regardless of their language proficiency levels.

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Singing and Language Learning in Early Childhood Settings: The case of Luxembourg

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Singing activities are a staple in early childhood settings. Beyond offering moments of relaxation, songs have potential benefits for children's development and their learning. For example, songs and rhymes may enrich children's familiarization with languages through the repetition of melodies and lyrics. Nonetheless, educators seem to value singing more as entertainment than as a learning tool (Vaiouli & Kirsch, 2025). Furthermore, few studies have examined either the functions of songs in multilingual settings or the manners in which teachers may use songs to scaffold children's learning.

Focusing on the context of multilingual Luxembourg, this presentation addresses this knowledge gap by exploring how songs are used by professionals in early childhood programs. Participants are professionals working in early childhood in Luxembourg serving children 2 to 6 years old. Our data set, which consists of qualitative and quantitative data, was collected in two different waves. First, qualitative data was collected through year-long observations at three early childhood centers, serving children aged 2 to 4 in multilingual Luxembourg (COMPARE project). Then, quantitative data was collected through an online, large-scale survey, including both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Qualitative analysis indicates four main areas for the use of songs: structuring the day and helping understand routine activities, enhancing socialization, entertaining children, and valuing home languages. Furthermore, children's participation varied across centers and educators and depended on the educators' pedagogical practices and the opportunities offered by the educators to scaffold learning. Quantitative results from the online survey provide further insights into the use of songs in relation to participants' self-reported attitudes, their understanding and knowledge on using songs. We conclude with research and policy recommendations, highlighting the need for professional development training that expands the educators' knowledge and skills necessary to maximize the benefits of songs in multilingual settings.

Vaiouli, P., & Kirsch, C. (2025). Singing in multilingual early childhood centers in Luxembourg. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 1-17.

Enhancing Language Teacher Education through Peer Observation: Insights from an Intervention with Pre-service Primary Education EFL Teachers in Catalonia

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Classroom observation provides pre-service teachers with the possibility to be part of and learn about classroom life before transitioning into regular teaching (Devos, 2014). Yet, the ability to critically and effectively notice what goes on in (English) language classrooms is an acquired skill – it is often difficult for prospective teachers to shift the observation from an impressionistic outlook to a more critical insight into those aspects of instruction which may not be directly observable but which condition the teaching-learning process (Salazar Noguera, 2018). Peer observation (PO) as a modality of classroom observation has received little attention in the context of English language teacher education even though recent studies advocate for its contribution towards increasing opportunities of observation, feedback and guidance in the context of university curricula (Goker, 2006). In this presentation, we will explore the impact of an instructional intervention carried out in the English Language Teaching (ELT) Minor of the Primary Education degree (n = 43) at several Catalan universities. The intervention comprised an initial training for PO with a database of annotated video recordings in real school contexts in Catalonia. PO was carried out with the Teacher Input Observation Scheme (TIOS) (Kersten et al., 2018) in a multi-step cycle. To measure the impact of the intervention, a questionnaire including both Likert-scale and open questions was administered tapping into students' perceptions towards (peer) observation and feedback before and after the intervention. Triangulation was achieved through focus groups and reflection documents elaborated by the participants during the intervention. The results indicate that pre-service English teachers acknowledge the benefits of peer observation for teacher training, yet they struggle to see the relation between observation and specific aspects of lesson planning and material design. The intervention also had a positive impact on students' comfortableness with PO and the quality of the feedback provided to peers. We will discuss the potential of PO for language teacher education and its role in bolstering reflective teaching and generating collaborative professional mindsets.

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Mapping primary school learners' linguistic repertoires, L2 motivation and attitudes across contexts: Evidence from Poland

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In Poland, a country undergoing transformation into an increasingly multilingual environment due to recent geopolitical developments (Rokita-Jaśkow et al., 2023), children are introduced to their first foreign language as early as in pre-school and to their second foreign language in grade 7 of primary school. It might be assumed that Polish primary school learners, through their exposure to foreign languages both inside and outside their classrooms, demonstrate high levels of motivation and positive attitudes towards foreign languages. It is, however, important to highlight the environmental factors that might affect the language learning process and L2 motivation (e.g., Butler, 2014; Iwaniec, 2020; Azzolini et al., 2022; Xu & Jin, 2024).

The main aim of this paper is, thus, to explore the motivational, affective and environmental dimensions of Polish primary school learners' linguistic repertoires. Accordingly, the following questions will be addressed: (1) What are the participants' linguistic repertoires and language preferences? (2) What is their attitude to English and other languages? (3) What motivates students to learn an additional language? (4) What is the impact of the environmental factors on the participants' L2 preferences, motivation and attitudes? This exploratory study involved 160 primary school learners in Poland, with data collected after grade 6 and the very beginning of grade 7. This target group offers particularly valuable insight, as they had just been introduced to another additional language at school and already had substantial experience learning a foreign language in both formal and informal contexts. The participants completed questionnaires designed to elicit information about their motivation and attitudes toward languages and L2 learning, their out-of-school contact with English and relevant environmental factors. They were asked about their home language, first foreign language (English), their second foreign language (introduced at school), their additional languages and the language preferences, i.e. the languages they would like to speak.

Preliminary findings indicate that the participants' attitudes and motivation towards languages are no longer determined by geographical and cultural proximity (cf. Mihaljević Djigunović, 2012). Their motivation for learning additional languages appears to be more diverse, and the range of their language preferences is broader. Overall, the participants exhibit high levels of plurilingual awareness and motivation; however, the contextual factors still have an impact on the types of motivation the students exhibit and their learning opportunities for learning additional languages.

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Rokita-Jaśkow, J., Wolanin, A., Król-Gierat, W., & Nosidlak, K. (2023). Bridging the 'dual lives': School socialization of young bi/multilinguals in the eyes of EFL teachers. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 26(4), 395–410.

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Exploring Language Teacher Identities in Linguistically and Institutionally Biased Contexts: A Case Study of Local Primary English Teachers in South Korean State Schools

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Primary school teachers in compulsory education systems are often trained as generalists rather than subject specialists, which may limit their linguistic expertise and communicative proficiency compared with secondary-level foreign language educators (Butler, 2004). In East Asian contexts, this challenge has been addressed through co-teaching models that pair local English teachers (LETs) with native English-speaking teachers or assistants (NETs) to deliver English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction (Carless & Walker, 2006). While these models have proliferated since the early 2000s, research has largely focused on NETs (e.g., Garton, Copland, & Mann, 2025; Choi, 2022) and on the dynamics of their partnerships (Moodie & Kim, 2025; Kim & Moodie, 2023), leaving the experiences and identity negotiations of LETs underexplored.

This qualitative case study investigates how South Korean primary LETs construct their professional identities in solo- and co-teaching contexts, examining how co-teaching reshapes their classroom discourse, pedagogical decision-making, and sense of agency within linguistically and institutionally stratified structures. The study recruited four co-teaching pairs, each comprising an experienced Korean LET (M = 14 years of teaching experience) holding a government-issued certificate, and a NET assistant with an online TEFL/TESOL credential but no formal teaching qualification or prior classroom experience. Data consisted of fourteen classroom observations and recordings, complemented by semi-structured interviews. Analytical procedures integrated Conversation Analysis and Positioning Theory to examine interactional cognitive positioning and identity performance.

Findings indicate that LETs' professional identities are contextually contingent and discursively negotiated. In solo-teaching, LETs exercised strong pedagogical control, positioning themselves as authoritative educators and linguistic role models for their students. In co-teaching, their identities became more fluid and relational as they navigated linguistic hierarchies and institutional power asymmetries. Co-teaching thus emerged as both a site of professional constraint and identity transformation for LETs.

This study advances understandings of teacher identity in EFL co-teaching contexts shaped by native-speakerism (Holliday, 2006) and institutional bias. It offers implications for teacher education policy and professional development, emphasising the need for collaborative and reflexive training that promotes equitable and sustainable co-teaching practices in multilingual classrooms.

Butler, Y. G. (2004). What level of English proficiency do elementary school teachers need to attain to teach EFL? *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(2), 245–278. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588380>

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Choi, J. (2022). The interplay of teacher identities and agency: A case study of two native English-speaking teachers in South Korea. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*, 117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TATE.2022.103804>

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Holliday, A. (2006). Native-speakerism. *ELT Journal*, 60(4), 385–387. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccl030>

Kim, S.-Y., & Moodie, I. (2023). The models of co-teaching and a spectrum for assessing collaboration: Examining English language co-teaching practices in South Korea. *Language Teaching Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688231218816>

Moodie, I., & Kim, S. Y. (2025). The breakdown of co-teaching: stories from multiple dyads of English co-teachers at different grade levels. *Teachers and Teaching*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2025.2490236>

Themed symposia

Symposium title:

Implementing virtual exchange in the early language learning classroom

Birsak de Jersey, K., Jeeves, H., Whyte, S. Wigham, C. R., Cutrim Schmid, E., Dagarin Fojkar, M., Brzosko-Barratt, K., Marchik, P., Rozmanič, T., Nicolás-Conesa, F., Coyle, Y., Férez Mora, P., Carrillo, E.

Virtual exchange (VE), defined as “the process of communicating and collaboratively learning with peers from different locations through the use of technology” (Dooly & Vinagre, 2021: 393) provides ample opportunities for language, cultural and digital learning. As a growing number of examples show, even children in primary and preschool English language education can benefit from this approach. It is claimed that the use of English in authentic communication situations can develop students’ language competences, boost their motivation and foster cultural learning (e.g. Cutrim Schmid et al., 2023; Kratzer et al., 2025; Pennock-Speck & Clavel Arroitia, 2022; Wigham & Whyte, 2024). While there is a solid body of research on VE in higher education (e.g. O’Dowd, 2021), its application in early language learning contexts remains under-researched (Dooly & Vinagre, 2021).

The symposium seeks to address this gap and to explore the implementation of VE with young learners. The three papers take both primary and pre-primary language education into account and focus on different stakeholders involved in the implementation: children, (pre-service) teachers and teacher trainers.

The presenters of paper 1 focus on dimensions of effective task design in VE projects in primary school. In paper 2, a survey with in-service teachers on their attitudes towards and experiences with VE will be presented. Paper 3 addresses challenges in designing and implementing VE-based activities for the pre-primary classroom.

Cutrim Schmid, E., Cvetkovic Kienle, A. & Şahin, H. (2023). Virtual exchanges as authentic scenarios for integrating a plurilingual perspective into EFL teaching and learning. *The Language Learning Journal*, 51(4): 544-558.

Cutrim Schmid, E., & Whyte, S. (2015). Teaching young learners with technology. In J. Bland (Ed.), *Teaching English to Young Learners. Critical Issues in Language Teaching with 3–12-year-olds* (pp 239-260). Bloomsbury.

Dooly, M., & Vinagre, M. (2021). Research into practice: Virtual exchange in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching*, 55(3), 392–406.

Dooly, M., & Sadler, R. (2016). Becoming little scientists: Technologically-enhanced project-based language learning. *Language Learning & Technology*, 20(1), 54-78.

Kratzer, A., Delgado, A., Cvetkovic Kienle, A., Dooly, M., & Cutrim Schmid, E. (2025, i.p.). Bridging cultures between rural areas: Plurilingual virtual exchange and intercultural communicative competence in primary school language education. In S. Silvia Melo-Pfeifer & V. Tavares (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of internationalization of language education*. Palgrave.

Pennock-Speck, B. & Clavel Arroitia, B. (2022). Virtual exchanges among primary-education pupils. Insights into a new arena. In: A. Potolia & M. Derivry-Plard (eds.). *Virtual Exchange for Intercultural Language Learning and Teaching* (pp. 115-132). Routledge.

O’Dowd, R. (2021). What do students learn in virtual exchange? A qualitative content analysis of learning outcomes across multiple exchanges. *International Journal of Educational Research* 109, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2021.101804>

Wigham, C., & Whyte, S. (2024). Sink or swim? Learner autonomy in synchronous oral telecollaboration from a task-based perspective. *EuroCALL conference 2024*, Trnava, Slovakia, 27 August.

Presentation 1: Task-Based Virtual Exchange for Young Learners: Research-Informed Design Guidelines and Pedagogical Insights

Virtual Exchange (VE) offers authentic opportunities for meaningful language use, particularly through synchronous oral interaction. However, conducting VE projects in primary contexts presents distinct pedagogical challenges, including the need to develop learners' confidence and readiness to engage with peers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Cutrim Schmid & Whyte, 2015; Dooly & Sadler, 2016). This presentation draws on a collaborative action research project conducted in French primary schools, which involved generalist teachers, teacher educators, and university researchers in the co-design and evaluation of task-based language teaching sequences for VE. The study examined three scenarios based on either synchronous or asynchronous interaction, implemented in both small-group and whole-class formats. Analysis of video recordings and participant interviews revealed how careful task planning, real-time facilitation, and reflective post-task practices can maximize the learning potential of VE activities. Findings point to key dimensions of effective task design for young learners, including task modality (synchronous vs. asynchronous), type (information vs. opinion gaps), interactional space (frontstage vs. backstage), cognitive load (task demands and supports), and task framing (focus on meaning vs. form). These dimensions informed research-based design guidelines for integrating VE in primary language education. The presentation uses a number of short video extracts to illustrate these rubrics and shows how these empirically grounded insights can be synthesised into a practical, theoretically informed framework. This set of design prompts supports teachers in developing VE tasks that are pedagogically sound and developmentally appropriate, contributing to current discussions on adapting task-based approaches for virtual exchanges in early language learning.

Presentation 2: Teachers' experiences with virtual exchange in the early foreign language classroom

This transnational study aims to gain insights into primary and pre-primary school language teachers' experiences of conducting VE projects in (pre-)schools. Data were collected from four different teaching contexts – Spain, Poland, Slovenia, and Germany – using both quantitative and qualitative research methods: a survey (N=309) and semi-structured interviews (N=11). The survey revealed that teachers had limited experience with VE projects, mainly due to a lack of international partnerships and insufficient pedagogical training in VE. However, the data obtained from experienced VE teachers through the survey (N=87) and interviews (N=11) revealed how teachers establish VE collaborations and how they design and implement transnational projects. They expressed strong positive views towards integrating VE into their classrooms, reporting many benefits for their students, such as increased intercultural awareness, opportunities for meaningful communication in a foreign language, and greater student autonomy. They also reported a surge in their own professional growth and motivation for teaching. Teachers noticed improved rapport with colleagues and students, as well as exchanging innovative pedagogical practices, including collaborative material development and resource sharing. Teachers also outlined challenges, such as problems with technology, integrating VE with existing curricula, and creating meaningful asynchronous and synchronous tasks for young learners whose language proficiency requires careful scaffolding. These findings can serve as a springboard for understanding the complexity of doing VE projects with young learners and highlight the crucial role of fostering international collaborations in continuous teacher education.

Presentation 3: Pedagogical challenges in designing Virtual Exchange activities for pre-primary EFL education

Virtual exchange (VE) has emerged as a transformative pedagogical approach in language education, facilitating cross-cultural communication and collaborative learning through technology-mediated interactions (see Dooly & Vinagre, 2021). While VE's efficacy in higher education contexts is well-documented (O'Dowd, 2021), its application in pre-primary teacher education remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by investigating the challenges encountered by 40 pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers when designing VE activities aimed at promoting young learners' language development. The activities were developed using a set of criteria derived from award-winning eTwinning projects, providing a novel framework for VE in early childhood education. The data for the study included the VE activities designed by the participants and reflective journals documenting the challenges encountered while doing so. The data were analysed using a mixed methods approach. The participants' VE activities and reflective journals were analysed thematically to explore recurring patterns in the data. Data-driven coding criteria were collaboratively established to ensure categories accurately reflected participants' experiences. Frequency counts were then computed for each thematic unit to identify the most commonly encountered challenges in designing and implementing VE-based activities for very young learners. Findings reveal a range of pedagogical and practical difficulties, which informed the development of a comprehensive set of practical guidelines to support educators in designing and conducting VE initiatives for pre-school language education. This study provides actionable recommendations for teacher educators and practitioners, thereby advancing the understanding of successful VE projects in early language learning contexts.

Symposium title:

Theorizing teacher professional learning through classroom-based assessment and peer interaction: Insights from a blended MOOC

Silva, E., Castro, C., Lindade, C., Mourão, S., Fradão, S., Leslie, C.

Teachers play a central role in shaping classroom-based assessment (CBA), yet they work within complex conditions, which are contextual as well as teacher- and learner-related (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017). Improved assessment literacy is key to overcoming these challenges, particularly entrenched traditional mindsets. This symposium shares data from a teacher education project in Portugal featuring a blended MOOC Classroom-Based Assessment in Primary English Education (CETAPS, n.d.). The blended MOOC aims to improve approaches to listening and speaking skills and their CBA, thus supporting a much-needed emphasis on spoken language in early language learning (Cameron, 2001).

Following recommendations for quality (e.g., Amado et al., 2022), the MOOC incorporates active learning, peer feedback, and reflection. The nine-week course integrates theory and practice: theoretical modules on assessment principles are followed by practical modules where participants implement classroom-based procedures for assessing listening, oral production, and oral interaction. Participants also complete an e-portfolio which supports structured reflection at key points in each learning sequence.

The first two iterations ran in 2024/2025 and 63% of the participant teachers successfully completed the two courses (n=157). Undertaken as a longitudinal cohort study employing a mixed methods approach, data for the papers in this symposium come from participants' pre- and post-MOOC surveys, focus groups, e-portfolios, forum interactions, and learner drawings with teacher reflections. The three papers present complementary perspectives on how participation in the blended MOOC shaped teachers' professional learning, identities, and assessment practices, offering an integrated theorization of teacher development through classroom-based assessment and peer interaction.

Amado, C., Dorotea, N., Pedro, A. & Piedade, J. (2022). MOOCs design: A conceptual framework for continuous teacher training in Portugal. *Education Sciences*, 12, 308. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12050308>

Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge University Press.

CETAPS (n.d.). A blended MOOC: 'Classroom-based assessment in primary English education'. Transforming Assessment Mindsets. <https://www.tambmooc.com/the-mooc/>

Jiménez Raya, M., Lamb, T. & Vieira, F. (2017). *Mapping autonomy in language education. A framework for learner and teacher development*. Peter Lang.

Presentation 1: “Who Am I When I Assess?”: Teacher Identity, Ideological Tensions and Formative Assessment in Early English Language Learning

This paper shares the results of a study which investigated how teacher ideologies and professional development experiences shape classroom-based assessment practices in early English language learning. Recent research has shown that teachers’ beliefs, values, and professional identities are central to how they interpret and enact educational reforms, particularly in formative assessment (e.g., Wiliam, 2018; Britton, 2021). Our study draws on this line of inquiry to examine how professional development contexts can mediate ideological tensions and support the emergence of more inclusive assessment identities.

Data were drawn from the first edition of the blended MOOC ‘Classroom-Based Assessment in Primary English Education’. The course offered interactive activities, online discussions, practical experimentation with formative assessment tools and self-reflection via an e-portfolio. Sixty-five teachers consented to be part of the TAM-bMOOC (Transforming Assessment Mindsets) project. For this paper their e-portfolios were thematically coded to identify recurring patterns related to teacher identity, assessment beliefs, and perceived institutional affordances or constraints.

The findings reveal a strong discursive alignment with formative, learner-centred assessment principles. However, teachers also reported persistent tensions with systemic demands that favour summative assessment (e.g., pressure from school leadership, parental expectations, and national curricula). These tensions often resulted in anxiety, self-doubt, or constrained implementation of formative practices. Nevertheless, some participants demonstrated ideological resistance and agency by integrating formative assessment into daily practice.

Our findings also suggest that teacher identity is fluid and responsive to professional development opportunities that highlight reflective practice and peer dialogue. The blended MOOC emerged as a valuable site for teachers where they can reflect on and reshape their assessment identities, foregrounding equity, learner engagement, and multilingual inclusion in early language education.

Britton, M. (2021). *Assessment for learning in primary language learning and teaching*. Multilingual Matters.

Wiliam, D. (2018). *Embedded formative assessment* (2nd ed.). Solution Tree Press.

Presentation 2: Exploring the influence of teacher-to-teacher peer feedback on professional learning through reflection

Teacher professional development is increasingly viewed as a continuous, social, and reflective process grounded in dialogue and collaborative construction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). With the rise of blended and online training models such as bMOOCs, new opportunities for teacher-to-teacher interaction have emerged, allowing enabling richer exchanges of teaching practices (Koukis & Jimoyiannis, 2020). Peer feedback lies at the heart of this process, supporting self-regulation and critical thinking, important components of professional growth (Bassatt, 2016; Jin et al, 2024).

This study is situated within the TAM-bMOOC (Transforming Assessment Mindsets) project which aims to develop primary English teachers' classroom-based assessment skills through a blended MOOC (bMOOC). It explores how teacher-to-teacher peer feedback, using a formative model ("two stars and a wish"), supports critical reflection, and how the interaction involved in giving feedback contributes to professional learning. The study draws on a theoretical framework connecting teacher-to-teacher peer feedback with reflective teaching practice (Brookfield, 2017; Little, et al., 2025). A thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted on 45 randomly selected 'collector documents' (collated artefacts and forum interactions of individual participants) from the second edition of the bMOOC.

Findings indicate that peer feedback exhibited characteristics known to enhance learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), i.e., specificity, constructiveness and supportiveness. Participants' reflections demonstrated some peer feedback uptake; however, they varied in depth, ranging from the less effective descriptive reflections to the more pedagogical and critical types that suggest deeper engagement with teaching practice. Given the importance of pedagogical frameworks as anchors for professional learning and reflective practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), the feedback process in the course was carefully scaffolded; a similar approach may also be necessary to deepen reflection through a more robust reflective framework. Implications for future bMOOC iterations include offering participants clearer criteria and guidance to foster more pedagogically rich reflections.

Bassot, B. (2016) *The reflective journal* (2nd ed.) Palgrave Macmillan.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa4>

Brookfield, S.D. (2017). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. (2nd Ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute.

Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81-112. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>

Jin, X., Tigelaar, D., van der Want, A., & Admiraal, W. (2024). Implementation models for teacher peer feedback: A systematic review. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2024.2363854>

Koukis, N., & Jimoyiannis, A. (2020). Towards a design framework of MOOCs for teacher development: Theoretical issues and analysis of teachers' achievements about Web 2.0 in language instruction. *Themes in eLearning*, 13, 69-86.

Little, T., Dawson, P., Boud, D. & Tai, J. (2025). What does it take to provide effective peer feedback?, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 50(5), 775-786, DOI: 10.1080/02602938.2025.2475059

Presentation 3: The Impact of a Professional Development MOOC on Learners' Perceptions of Classroom-Based Assessment

The primary purpose of assessment is to enhance student learning (Ghosn, 2019). In early language learning contexts, assessment should identify learners' strengths and areas for development, support self-regulation, and influence affective attitudes towards language learning and assessment. This formative approach emphasises the active participation of learners, who have their own perceptions, beliefs and opinions of assessment, which may differ significantly from those of their teachers. Establishing learners' perspectives is thus essential to verify classroom practices and evaluate the effectiveness of pedagogical innovation.

Despite its importance, research on learners' perceptions of assessment remains limited, particularly in primary education (Remesal, 2009). Yet evidence suggests that young learners can express their views on assessment as early as their second year of schooling (Remesal, 2009). While interviews may inhibit expression, and questionnaires offer only partial insight into affective experiences, drawings or 'visual narratives' (Inözü, 2017) offer a valuable alternative. As Thomsen and Jolley (1998) note, such methods help children recall and communicate experiences in greater detail and are typically perceived as enjoyable and accessible.

This study explores the impact of a blended MOOC (CETAPS, n.d.) on young learners' perceptions of classroom-based assessment before and after their teachers' participation. Data were collected from a total of sixty visual narratives and corresponding teacher accounts following two iterations of the MOOC, and analysed qualitatively using an emic approach (Seedhouse, 2004) to maintain close alignment with participants' perspectives.

The study addresses two research questions:

1. How do primary English learners' visual narratives of classroom-based assessment differ before and after their teachers' participation in the TAMbMOOC?
2. In what ways does the TAMbMOOC contribute to these changes?

Preliminary findings will be discussed in relation to shifts in learners' perceptions of assessment and the broader implications of MOOCs for supporting teacher professional development in young learner assessment.

CETAPS. (n.d.). A blended MOOC: 'Classroom-based assessment in primary English education'. Transforming Assessment Mindsets. <https://www.tambmooc.com/the-mooc/>

Ghosn, I. (2019). Integrating developmentally appropriate assessment with instruction in the young learner classroom. In D. Prošić-Santovac & S. Rixon (Eds.), *Integrating assessment in early language learning and teaching practice* (pp. 52-68). Multilingual Matters.

Inözü, J. (2017). Drawings are talking: Exploring language learners' beliefs through visual narratives. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 1-24. DOI 10.1515/applirev-2016-1062

Remesal, A. (2009). Accessing primary pupil's conceptions of daily classroom assessment practices. In McInerney, D., Brown, G., and Liem, G. (Eds.), *Student perspectives on assessment: What students can tell us about assessment for learning* (pp. 25-51). Information Age Publishing.

Seedhouse, P. (2004). *The interactional architecture of the language classroom: A conversation analysis perspective*. Oxford University Press.

Thomas, G. V., & Jolley, R. P. (1998). Drawing conclusions: A re-examination of empirical and conceptual bases for psychological evaluation of children from their drawings. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 37(2), 127-139.

Symposium title:

Researching Early Language and Literacy Learning with Visual Methodologies

Pöyliö, H., Ahosola, O., Roiha, A., Marzà, A., Mård-Miettinen, K., Pitkänen-Huhta, A., Hakola, E., Sopanen, P., Saukko-Rauta, L.

This symposium focuses on visual methods in early language learning research. Visual research methods have proliferated in recent years and applied linguistics is even suggested to have undergone a visual turn (Kalaja & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2018). Visual research methods, such as drawings, photography, painting, comics and collage, fall under broader arts-based research methods (Wang et al., 2017). These visual methods have been used with children (e.g. Prasad, 2021), adolescents and adults (e.g. Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2025).

Visual methods are believed to have several advantages in studying people's lived experiences and perceptions. They are considered to offer participants an alternative and, for some, more natural way of expressing themselves than simply writing or speaking (Dufva et al., 2011; Heath et al., 2009). With young children, visual methods such as 'draw and write' approach, has been found to generate more ideas than writing alone. Visual methods are claimed to be especially suitable for children who have language-based disabilities (Angell et al., 2015).

This symposium explores the use of visual research methods in early language education from the perspective of both students and teachers. Through three presentations, it examines the potential and shortcomings of visual methods in early language and literacy learning related research considering the following questions: How are visualizations used? What is the purpose of visualizations? Which visualizations work best in ELL context? Who produces the visualizations? Are visualizations done individually or in a group? Do visualizations involve the participants' own interpretation produced using other modalities? How are visualizations analyzed?

Angell, C., Alexander, J., & Hunt, J. (2015). 'Draw, write and tell': A literature review and methodological development on the 'draw and write' research method. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 13(1), 17–28.

Dufva, H., Aro, M., Alanen, R., & Kalaja, P. (2011). Voices of literacy, images of books: Sociocognitive approach to multimodality in learner beliefs. *ForumSprache*, 6, 58–74.

Heath, S., Brooks, R., Cleaver, E., & Ireland, E. (2009) *Researching Young People's Lives*. Sage.

Kalaja, P., & Pitkänen-Huhta, A. (2018). ALR special issue: Visual methods in applied language studies. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 9(2–3), 157–176.

Kalaja, P., & Melo-Pfeifer, S. (2025) (Eds.). *Visualising Language Students and Teachers as Multilinguals. Advancing Social Justice in Education*. Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Prasad, G. (2021). Reframing expertise: Learning with and from children as co-investigators of their plurilingual practices and experiences. In K. Kuchah & A. Pinter (Eds.), *Ethical and methodological issues in researching young language learners in school contexts* (p. 106-125). Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Rose, G. (2016) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials* (4th edn). Sage.

Wang, Q., Coemans, S., Siegesmund, R., & Hannes, K. (2017). Arts-based methods in socially engaged research practice: A classification framework. *Art/Research International: An International Journal*, 2(2), 5–39. <https://doi.org/10.18432/R26G8P>

Presentation I: Drawing as a method for studying the English learning experiences of young English learners with language difficulties

On average, 9% of students have low language skills in their first language (Hill et al., 2024). Language disorders refer to problems in receptive and/or expressive language (Bishop et al., 2017). These problems also affect foreign language learning (Zoutenbier & Zwitserlood, 2019). In Finland students with developmental language disorders participate alongside their class peers in compulsory foreign language learning, which begins in the first grade.

A pilot study by Authors (2021) used drawings with young English learners with learning difficulties and found it to be a beneficial way for students to structure their thoughts when followed by an interview. The study followed the characteristics of the draw-write-tell method. The core of this method is to give students a voice and interpretive power (Angell et al., 2015). Students with language difficulties might have problems for example in semantics or pragmatics (Bishop et al., 2017). This can affect their understanding of interview questions or their ability to express personal opinions and talk about abstract concepts. Therefore, traditional interview methods might not be suitable for them.

This presentation focuses on the initial phase of our longitudinal study. The aim of the study is to investigate how students' language skills, attitudes, language self-concept, and self-efficacy develop during the first three years of formal language learning and what factors are associated with this development. The data for this study were collected in Spring 2026. The participants were Finnish first-grade students with language difficulties, learning English as a foreign language. The children drew a picture on the theme "How do English lessons look and feel like". This was followed by an interview related to the drawing.

In this presentation, we explain the visual data collection method used and highlight its usefulness, advantages, and disadvantages, and ethical considerations when used with students with language difficulties.

Angell, C., Alexander, J., & Hunt, J. (2015). 'Draw, write and tell': A literature review and methodological development on the 'draw and write' research method. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 13(1), 17–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X14538592>

Authors (2021). Anonymized reference.

Bishop, D.V.M., Snowling, M.J., Thompson, P.A., Greenhalgh, T., consortium, C. & Klee, T.M. (2017) CATALISE: a multinational and multidisciplinary Delphi consensus study of problems with language development. Phase 2. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 58(10), 1068. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12721>

Hill, E., Calder, S., Candy, C., Truscott, G., Kaur, J., Savage, B., & Reilly, S. (2024). Low language capacity in childhood: A systematic review of prevalence estimates. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 59(1), 124-142. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1460-6984.12944>

Zoutenbier, I., & Zwitserlood, R. (2019). Exploring the relationship between native language skills and foreign language learning in children with developmental language disorders. *Clinical Linguistics & Phonetics*, 33(7), 641-653. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699206.2019.1576769>

Presentation 2: Visual diaries as vehicles for multimodal expression of teachers regarding multiliteracies

Our citizen science project explores the conceptions and practices of early education teachers aiming to gauge the connections between the theoretical tenets of multiliteracies (Kalantzis & Cope, 2023) and the understanding of the concept.

Over the course of two months, 21 teachers from the Valencian region in Spain collaborated in the data production process by creating a visual diary responding to eight prompts provided by researchers. Participants are classroom teachers who are responsible for the linguistic education of students in both Catalan and Spanish, following a curriculum with a strong plurilingual approach (Safont, 2023). The prompts directed teachers at reflecting around the concept of multiliteracies, their related practices, the assessment tools and strategies to record multimodal meaning making by students, and multilingualism.

Each diary consists of eight entries composed of a photograph and a written text. Visual diaries are one of the instruments proposed by visual research methods (Margolis & Pawels 2011) and was adopted for its potential to foster participation and empowerment (Azzarito, 2023), for the reflective capacity it provides (Chaplin, 2011), and for its conceptual and methodological alignment with the objectives of our research, as a multimodal product.

Once the data (168 diary entries) were collected, 10 teachers participated in their analysis, providing their own stance in the categorization and interpretation of responses. In this presentation we will focus on the analysis of the visual component of the teachers' diaries and its relation to the written text: we will present the process undergone to develop the data analysis methodology, and discuss results in terms of the visual and multimodal literacy deployed by teachers in their diaries. The presentation will use arts-based research instruments (Marín-Viadel & Roldán, 2014) to present the data, such as visual means or visual essays.

Azzarito, L. (2023). Participatory Visual Research for Community Empowerment and Social Change: Photovoice, Visual Diary, Photojournalism, and Fotonovela. In L. Azzarito (Ed.) *Visual Methods for Social Justice in Education* (pp. 75-96). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Chaplin, E. (2011). The Photo Diary as an Autoethnographic Method. In E. Margolis & L. Pawels (Eds.) *The Sage handbook of visual research methods* (pp. 241-262). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Kalantzis, M., & Cope, W. (2023). Multiliteracies: Life of an idea. *The International Journal of Literacies*, 30(2), 17.

Margolis, E., & Pauwels, L. (Eds.). (2011). *The SAGE handbook of visual research methods*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Marín-Viadel, R., & Roldán, J. (2014). 4 quantitative tools and 3 qualitative tools in Visual Arts based Educational Research. In R. Marín-Viadel, J. Roldán & F. Pérez Martín (Eds.) *Estrategias, técnicas e instrumentos en Investigación basada en Artes e Investigación Artística [Strategies, techniques and instruments in Arts based Research and Artistic Research]* (pp. 71-114). Granada: University of Granada.

Safont, P. (2023). Plurilingual Education in the Valencian Community. In J.M. Cots (Ed.) *Profiling plurilingual education: a pilot study of four Spanish autonomous communities* (pp. 101-103). Lleida: Edicions de la Universitat de Lleida.

Presentation 3: Sketchnoting as an analytical data generation method in ELL classrooms

This presentation examines the use of sketchnoting as a research method from different participant perspectives. Sketchnotes are “a visual thinking form that integrates notes and sketches” (Fernández-Fontecha et al., 2019, p. 7) and “visual notes created from a mix of handwriting, drawings, hand-drawn typography, shapes and visual elements” (Rohde, 2013, p. 2). Previous research on sketchnoting has mainly focused on the use of sketchnotes as a learning aid in understanding complex material (e.g. Altieri, 2017). There is thus no literature on sketchnoting as a research method in data generation.

In our project, a sketchnoter created 22 sketchnotes of classroom activities (10 classrooms), either live or video-based. They were further used as elicitation material in discussions with teachers (6) and learners (48). The aim was to offer an alternative window into ELL classroom practices, not created by the researchers nor the teachers or learners. The sketchnoter also did live sketchnoting of discussions with four focal learners.

In our qualitative content analysis, we focused on how the participants – researchers, the sketchnoter, teachers, learners – reacted to the use of sketchnotes in different phases of data generation. Our data comprise teacher and learner interviews, recorded learner interactions in classrooms, field notes and reflective discussions among researchers and with the live sketcher.

We found that the participants reacted differently to the sketchnotes. The sketchnoter aimed to capture the general progression and flow of classroom activities, along with the reactions and interactions of both teachers and learners. Some teachers and learners, however, focused on how well the sketchnote represented their experiences by commenting on small details in the sketchnote. The researchers, for their part, wanted to modify the sketchnotes for learner use, placing a clearer focus on visual representation.

Altieri, J. L. (2017), “From Sketchnotes to Think-Alouds: Addressing the Challenges of Social Studies Text”, *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 8–12.

Fernández-Fontecha, A., O'Halloran, K. L., Tan, S., & Wignell, P. (2019), “A multimodal approach to visual thinking: the scientific sketchnote”, *Visual Communication*, 18(1), pp. 5–29.

Rohde, M. (2013). *The Sketchnote Handbook: the illustrated guide to visual note taking*. Peachpit Press.

Posters

Lights, Captions, Action! How captioned videos support L2 reading in young learners from input-limited contexts

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Evidence collected in L1 naturalistic contexts with primary school students has shown that, overall, captioned-video viewing supports the development of reading skills, especially for low achievers at risk of reading failure (e.g., Linebarger et al., 2010). Nevertheless, these outcomes may not fully translate to L2 studies with participants from input-limited contexts, as key differences between L1 and L2 readers relate to language proficiency and exposure to print, which are both crucial for familiarizing learners with L2 orthographic patterns and automatizing low-level reading skills (Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Jiang, 2018). The present study aimed to fill this gap by exploring the effects of extensive captioned-video viewing on English reading efficacy, measured as silent reading speed and comprehension (Llanes, 2018), in 96 primary school students aged 9–11. It also examined the influence of treatment-related factors (e.g., lag-effects between episodes) and language-related factors (in L1 and L2) on the outcomes. Results confirmed that captioned-video viewing is an effective tool for enhancing L2 reading efficacy, potentially compensating for limited exposure to print. Consistent with prior research on L2 reading, listening skills and vocabulary knowledge were strong predictors of learners' progress over time (e.g., Krepel et al., 2021; Verhoeven & van Leeuwe, 2012). Moreover, L1 reading efficacy supported the reading of L2 captions, particularly among fourth graders who watched the episodes with longer lags between episodes (Birch & Fulop, 2021). These findings support the hypothesis that learners gradually assimilate and accommodate L1 reading strategies to manage L2 print (Perfetti et al., 2007). Overall, captioned videos represent a promising, evidence-based tool for supporting early L2 reading development, bridging gaps in exposure while providing engaging and interactive learning experiences. The study also offers practical insights for classroom practice, and how captioned videos can be applied to support young learners' L2 reading development.

Birch, B., & Fulop, S. (2021). English L2 reading: Getting to the bottom. Routledge. Grabe, W. (2009). Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grabe, W., & Jiang, X. (2018). First and second language reading. In J.I. Lontas, T. International Association and M. DelliCarpini (Eds.), *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching* (pp. 1-7). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.e elt0476>

Krepel, A., de Bree, E. H., Mulder, E., van de Ven, M., Segers, E., Verhoeven, L., & de Jong, P. F. (2021). The unique contribution of vocabulary in the reading development of English as a foreign language. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 44, 453–474. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.12350>

Linebarger, D., Taylor Piotrowski, J., & Greenwood, C. (2010). On-screen print: the role of captions as a supplemental literacy tool. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 33(2), 148-167.

Llanes, A. (2018). Reading in English as a foreign language: Examining differences in reading speed, comprehension, efficacy and L1 cross-linguistic influence across grades. *Investigaciones Sobre Lectura*, 9, 1–49.

Perfetti, C., Liu, Y., Fiez, J., Nelson, J., Bolger, D., & Tan, L. (2007). Reading in two writing systems: Accommodation and assimilation in the brain's reading network. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 10(2), 131-146.

Verhoeven, L., & van Leeuwe, J. (2012). The simple view of second language reading throughout the primary grades. *Reading and writing*, 25(8), 1805–1818. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-011-9346-3>

Extramural Exposure and Implicit Learning in Young Learners' English Speaking Proficiency

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Research has revealed the positive role of Extramural Exposure (EE) in language learning (Muñoz & Cadierno, 2021; Peters, 2018), and the role of linguistic distance in aiding language gains (Lindgren & Muñoz, 2013). Additionally, it has been shown that learners within an instructional context made more significant gains in their speaking proficiency when they were exposed to input rich, authentic materials (Rousse-Malpat & Verspoor, 2018). This study builds on this work by investigating the role of extramural exposure on speaking and comparing students who study English through formal/explicit instruction and those who learned English purely through informal/implicit learning. The Hungarian context makes this situation interesting given that Hungarian is quite linguistically different from English, meaning learners do not benefit from a large vocabulary of L1 cognates.

The study is part of an ongoing project examining EE in Hungarian YLs (aged 10–12) which include two groups: students who study English in a Bilingual English (BE) program with explicit instruction and students who study German (GFL) and have learned English through EE. In our pilot group (n = 52), the BE group outscores the GFL group with 29% of the BE group reaching an A2 level of speaking proficiency, compared to 13% in the GFL group.

For comparison, the top-scoring participants (all A2 level) from both groups are compared using data from an oral picture storytelling exercise (Cambridge Flyers Exam). Criteria for analysis are features that show stages of proficiency development (cf. Verspoor et al., 2012): percentage of correct clauses, percentage of clauses with low-frequency words, percentage of present vs. past tense, and mean length of utterance. Among the pilot group, GFL students outperformed the BE students in most parameters.

The GFL had 77% error-free clauses and the BE group had 44%. GFL students used low-frequency words more frequently (16% compared to 10%). GFL students used more past tense in 64% of clauses, while BE students used past tense only 44%. The BE group outperformed the GFL group for mean length of utterance (9.7 to 9.1).

Initial results show that oral skills can develop through EE, demonstrating the ability for YLs to implicitly learn grammatical structures and vocabulary which is in line with previous research (Peters, 2018; Rousse-Malpat, 2019).

Muñoz, Carmen & Cadierno, Teresa. (2021). How do differences in exposure affect English language learning? A comparison of teenagers in two learning environments. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*. 11. 185-212. 10.14746/ssllt.2021.11.2.2.

Peters, E. (2018). The effect of out-of-class exposure to English language media on learners' vocabulary knowledge. *ITL - International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 169(1), 142–168. <https://doi.org/10.1075/itl.00010.pet>

Rousse-Malpat, A. (2019). Effectiveness of explicit vs. implicit L2 instruction: A longitudinal classroom study on oral and written skills. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

Verspoor, M., Schmid, M. S., & Xu, X. (2012). A dynamic usage based perspective on L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21(3), 239-263.

Picturebooks in the primary EFL classroom – from language to literary learning?

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Picturebooks are a popular medium in many primary EFL classrooms (cf. e.g. Ellis & Brewster 2014; Mourão 2017). They are used to motivate children to learn the foreign language, to introduce new words and linguistic structures, to foster listening comprehension and to initiate cultural learning (cf. e.g. Frisch 2015: 224f.; Kolb & Schocker 2021: 126ff.). Frequently, it is argued that the illustrations in picturebooks support the understanding of the story. This prevailing ‘focus on the words’ (Mourão 2017: 248) does not fully exploit the potential of picturebooks as multimodal texts with a complex relationship between visual and verbal text.

The LiLePic (Literary Learning with Young EFL Learners through picturebooks) project aims to explore the opportunities for literary learning with picturebooks. Based on a theoretical competence model (Alter & Frisch 2018; Diehr & Surkamp 2015; Dreßler, Frisch, Kolb & Wunderlich, under revision), the project identifies suitable picturebooks, develops and evaluates tasks for the primary classroom and sheds light on literature-related competences that children can develop in the early English language classroom.

The paper will present the relevance of the study for the early English language classroom, the objectives of the LiLePic project, as well as characteristics of the tasks that have been developed. This is followed by first results of the classroom research. In collaboration with teachers, tasks aimed at fostering literature-related competences were implemented in different classrooms. In these tasks, children were supposed to show their understanding of different elements of the picturebook (e.g. plot, character constellations, relationship between the visual and the verbal text) through multimodal texts (e.g. comics, picturebook page, annotated drawings). These learner texts were analysed in terms of indicators of literary learning, using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2021).

The study shows that children engage with picture books in diverse and meaningful ways: by relating the content to their own experiences, they reveal varied interpretive approaches; by creating their own stories, they demonstrate an understanding of narrative structures, character relationships and sequencing of events; by discussing visual design elements, they articulate how meaning is constructed; and by employing multimodal text types, they effectively compensate for limited language proficiency.

Alter, Grit & Frisch, S. (2018). Literarisches Lernen schon in der Grundschule? The Potential of Picture Books." In: Grundschule Englisch. 63.2-5.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2021). Thematic analysis. A practical guide. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Diehr, B. & Surkamp, C. (2015). "Die Entwicklung literaturbezogener Kompetenzen in der Sekundarstufe I: Modellierung, Abschlussprofil und Evaluation". In Hallet, W., Surkamp, C., Krämer, U. (eds.). Literaturkompetenzen Englisch. Modellierung - Curriculum - Unterrichtsbeispiele. Hannover: Friedrich. 21-40.

Dreßler, Constanze, Frisch, Stefanie, Kolb, Annika & Wunderlich, Axel (under review). Language and literary learning through picturebooks in the primary EFL classroom – insights from the LiLePic project. In: Benitt, N., Bolze, H. & Schmitdt, K. (eds.). *Teaching (With) Picturebooks: Context, Competences, Criticism*. Narr.

Frisch, S. 2015. "Worlds of words and pictures. Schmökern in englischsprachigen Bilderbüchern." In Dehn, Mechthild/Merklinger, Daniela (Hrsg.). Erzählen - Vorlesen - Zum Schmökern anregen. Grundschulverband. 223-232.

Kolb, A. & Schocker, M. (2021). Teaching English in the primary school. A task-based introduction for pre- and in-service teachers. Seelze: Klett / Kallmeyer.

Mourão, S. (2017). "The Picturebook in Instructed Foreign Language Learning Contexts". In *The Edinburgh Companion to Children's Literature*: Edinburgh University Press, 245-262.

Exploring the metapragmatic awareness of young Croatian EFL learners

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The present study employs the data collection instruments and procedures developed by Myrset and Savić (2021) to explore how Croatian young learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) conceptualise and discuss pragmatic meaning. Metapragmatic awareness, defined by Myrset and Savić (2021) as the ability to verbalise reflections on linguistic forms, contextual features, and their interplay, is an essential aspect of pragmatic development. However, most research on pragmatics with young EFL learners has focused on the production or comprehension of specific speech acts (e.g., Barón Parés, 2012; Lee, 2012; Schauer, 2019), offering only limited insight into children's own reflections. Consequently, empirical evidence from young language learners across different geographical contexts remains scarce, with studies in Norway and Cyprus representing notable exceptions (e.g., Savić, 2021; Savić & Myrset, 2022; Savić et al., 2022).

The participants in this study were twenty 9-year-old L1 Croatian EFL learners. Two elicitation tasks developed by Myrset and Savić (2021), the Emoticon Task and the Ranking Circle, were used to stimulate metapragmatic discussion. In the Emoticon Task, learners evaluated the politeness of requests they had previously produced in response to video-prompted discourse completion tasks and explained their evaluations. In the Ranking Circle, they identified factors influencing how one should ask for something in English and then ranked these factors according to perceived importance. The study aims to examine the extent to which children at this developmental stage can engage in explicit reflection on pragmatic choices, how they conceptualise politeness and appropriateness across languages, and what interpretative resources they draw on. By comparing these results with previous studies, the research contributes to the growing body of evidence on young learners' metapragmatic capacities. Finally, the findings are discussed in relation to the pedagogical potential of such tasks for addressing L2 pragmatics in the young learner classroom, an area still largely neglected in both research and practice.

Barón Parés, J. (2012) 'Please, please, please': Trying to be polite in an EFL context. In L.F. Amaya, M.O. Lopez, R.G. Moron, M.P. Cruz, M.M. Borrero and M.R. Barranca (eds.) *New Perspectives on (Im)politeness and Interpersonal Communication* (pp. 174–197). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Lee, C. (2012) 'Mum, sister hit me': Interlanguage complaint strategies of Cantonese learners of English from childhood to their teens. *International Review of Pragmatics* 4, 80–109.

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An exploration of target L2 morphemes in the oral production of young EFL learners in Croatia

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Although the second language (L2) acquisition of morphology has been a fruitful area of research in the past decades, it has predominantly been investigated in late L2 learners. In children, it has mainly been explored in speakers of English as a second language (ESL) with very few studies on children who learn English as a foreign language (EFL). This under-investigated gap is particularly important since the limited research on EFL learners to date shows that grammatical morpheme acquisition presents ELF and ESL learners with similar challenges (e.g., Semren, 2017; Villarreal Olaizola & García Mayo, 2009).

Therefore, the current study presents the findings from a longitudinal oral production study with 9/10-year-old L1 Croatian EFL students who were followed up at the age of 11/12. At both times, the children were presented with four picture stories and were asked to narrate the plot of each story, which was recorded. We analysed the frequency and accuracy of morpheme production separately using Poisson and Logistic regressions respectively.

Our results are largely in line with the limited research so far in this area: young EFL learners have few issues using the be copula and, eventually, the irregular past simple forms, but had considerable problems with accurately supplying the 3rd person singular -s at both data collection points. We also observed a be + base form structure, especially at the earlier stage, which appears to be an emergent past simple construction.

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Multilingual literacy in the Ladin school system of south Tyrol: a trilingual approach to early language learning and cultural identity

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The Ladin school system in South Tyrol is a distinctive model of multilingual education. Its trilingual approach reflects the region's cultural diversity and helps children to develop strong multilingual skills.

For about 15 years, primary school pupils have been learning to read and write in three languages (Ladin, Italian and German). Multilingual literacy and phonological programs support this process by fostering metalinguistic awareness and literacy skills across languages since the kindergartens.

A key development in this system is the "Alfabetier plurilingual", a literacy toolkit, which is designed to support reading and writing in a pupils' strongest language. It allows children to begin literacy learning in Ladin, German or Italian, depending on their individual profile. Teachers act as multilingual role models, applying differentiated strategies to support literacy in all three languages.

A recent research-study has evaluated the writing abilities of pupils at the end of their first year of school. The results demonstrate that it is possible to learn to read and write in more than two languages. This presentation will highlight different writing abilities and the factors that most influence multilingual literacy.

Traditional and Digital Picturebooks in Early L2 English Classrooms: Teachers' Perceptions and Practices in France and Portugal

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Picturebooks play a crucial role in children's literature, supporting vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and understanding of the world (Appleyard, 1990; Cremin et al., 2008). In second language (L2) learning, picturebooks in the target language facilitate the development of lexical, grammatical, and phonological knowledge (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Maizonniaux, 2020). The emergence of digital picturebooks, which combine multimodal features including text, sound, and interactivity, offers additional opportunities for engagement and learning (Conrad et al., 2021), yet their use in classrooms remains limited.

This study investigates the perceptions and practices of pre-primary teachers in France and Portugal with regards to the use of traditional and digital picturebooks in English L2 sessions for children aged three to six. A comparative design was adopted, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data were collected through a survey administered to 23 generalist pre-primary teachers (11 in Portugal, 12 in France). Qualitative data were gathered via classroom observations in four pre-primary classrooms (two per country) and semi-structured interviews with these four teachers, allowing for an in-depth understanding of how picturebooks are used in practice and how teachers' reported perceptions align with observed teaching behaviors.

Our results reveal clear contextual contrasts. Portuguese teachers showed higher English proficiency, with 73% reaching CEFR level C2 (Council of Europe, 2001), while most French participants self-assessed at level B2 (33%). Moreover, 55% of Portuguese respondents had received specific training in using picturebooks for English teaching, compared to 33% of their French counterparts. All Portuguese teachers incorporated picturebooks into their lessons, with 73% doing so on a regular basis. In contrast, 83% of French teachers included picturebooks, though only 60% reported frequent use. Digital picturebooks were underutilized in both contexts, with 64% of Portuguese and 75% of French teachers reporting non-use, largely due to limited awareness and restricted access. Class observations revealed that Portuguese children actively engaged with English picturebooks, comprehending simple instructions and producing basic sentences, reflecting both teacher fluency and instructional confidence. French teachers, conversely, exhibited lower confidence and limited training, contributing to more constrained use of picturebooks. Our findings underscore the importance of teacher training and support to enhance L2 pedagogy through both traditional and digital picturebooks.

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Appreciative Inquiry into Continuous Professional Development of Primary English Language Teachers: Results of a Pilot Research Conducted in a Czech School

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Masaryk University

Foreign language education in Czechia faces an upcoming change. In 2027 learning English as a foreign language (EFL) becomes compulsory from the first year in all primary schools. Despite these changes and growing interest in the field of primary foreign language education in Czechia, there remains a lack of research in the continuing professional development (CPD) of primary English language teachers. To help bridge the gap, action research known as Appreciative Inquiry was conducted fulfilling two aims: firstly, to collect data exploring CPD of EFL primary school teachers and secondly, to further facilitate the participants' continuing professional development. Based on positive psychology, Appreciative Inquiry uncovers what gives life in the profession, what motivates and brings joy to the teachers before it encourages them to build on their strengths in the process of professional growth and improvement. Three primary EFL teachers participated in the pilot stage of this type of action research. Semi-structured interviews, action research journals and a focus group were used to obtain data which were analyzed qualitatively. The findings indicate varied CPD backgrounds as well as unique ways the participants experience their CPD. While all three reported high levels of motivation to improve in their profession, the kinds of their CPD activities and the goals they set for themselves differ, uncovering highly specific developmental needs. Apart from language and methodology competences, the participants also aimed at improving their wellbeing in the profession. They drew on the strengths of good communication skills, their love for the language and the profession.

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Teaching the English existential sentence: a pilot study

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Teaching the English language often runs into difficulties arising from the differences between the mother tongue (Czech) and the target language (English). The differences between these two languages exist not only on the sound/graphic, morphemic, lexical, and textual levels but also on the level of syntax with differences in the formation of word order. The differences relate to the analytic or synthetic type of language. While in English, which is analytic from a morphological perspective, the basic function of word order is grammatical, in Czech, which is synthetic, word order is primarily applied as a means of the functional sentence perspective. The use of inflection in the Czech language (changing forms through declension and conjugation) allows for a freer word order. In contrast, English, being an analytic language, uses only very limited inflection. The grammatical functions of individual words are expressed primarily by word order. The differences between the two languages manifest in the formation of sentences which express the existence or occurrence of something in a certain place. To express existence, English uses a special sentence structure called the existential sentence, in which the word *there* functions as a preliminary subject and is placed before the verb. Czech, however, expresses existence only through a change in word order. Due to the differences, it may be quite difficult, especially for young learners of English, to understand and learn the English existential sentence structure. The conference presentation introduces the process and the outcomes of the pilot study, which was carried out as part of the dissertation project, the main question of which is How do teachers explain the English existential sentence in Czech primary and lower secondary schools? The pilot study was carried out in two schools in the Czech Republic. The data collection involved three methods, namely observations, text analyses and a semi-structured interviews. The lesson observations collected data on teaching the English existential sentence. Following the observation the pupils were asked to write a piece of text in which they described a picture. The sentences from the text were subsequently categorized in terms of their syntactic structure and function. Finally, the teacher provided a semi-structured interview in which he/she was asked questions related to teaching the English existential sentence as a structure with no syntactic equivalent in Czech. All collected data was analysed and synthesized as to provide the answer to the main research question.

Teaching Politeness to Children: Storybooks and Audiovisual Materials in Early Foreign Language Learning

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This paper presents two complementary studies that examine the development of pragmatic awareness and politeness strategies among very young English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Although previous research has shown the benefits of teaching pragmatics to adolescent and adult learners (Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019; Taguchi, 2015), it remains largely absent from early language curricula (González-Lloret, 2019), and little is known about how young children acquire pragmatic competence (Schauer, 2022). Both studies address this gap by exploring the effects of pedagogical interventions using storybooks and audiovisual materials.

The first study investigated how storybooks and audiovisual input can foster politeness in seven-year-old beginner learners of English. Seven participants were divided into two groups: one engaged with storybooks (Please Mr Panda; We Love You, Mr Panda; Wash Your Hands, Mr Panda; and Bug in a Vacuum) and the other with audiovisual materials (selected excerpts from Up, Hotel Transylvania, Despicable Me, and Bluey). A pre-/post-test consisting of oral questions assessed gains in pragmatic awareness and production. Despite learners' limited output, results revealed positive effects, with both materials enhancing pragmatic understanding, especially audiovisual input, which facilitated recognition of politeness strategies through multimodal cues.

The second study focused on an even younger cohort: seven Catalan/Spanish and one Chinese/Spanish five-year-old learners in pre-primary education. Using four illustrated books (Please, Mr Panda; Thank You, Mr Panda; I'll Wait, Mr Panda; and The Crayons: Trick or Treat), the intervention targeted requests, responses, and expressions of gratitude. Data were collected through pre-/post-tests in which participants judged the politeness and appropriateness of six situations, followed by in-class discussions. Findings indicated improvement in pragmatic awareness in five of the six situations and greater ability to perform the target speech acts, showing that explicit pragmatic instruction benefits even very young learners.

Overall, the two studies provide evidence that story-based and audiovisual materials effectively support teaching pragmatics to young EFL learners. They highlight the importance of contextual, multimodal input in fostering early awareness of politeness norms and the social dimensions of language. These results suggest that integrating pragmatics into early EFL education is both feasible and advantageous for learners' communicative competence.

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PhD Workshop Presentations

Redesigning the schoolscape in a Catalan primary school through a translanguaging lens

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In response to the growing linguistic diversity in educational settings, multilingual pedagogies have gained prominence as alternatives to traditional monolingual approaches. Central to this shift is the concept of translanguaging, which emerged as a transformative approach to multilingual education. It redefines how language is conceptualized and practiced in schools by encouraging the flexible use of students' full linguistic repertoires for learning and communication. While translanguaging is recognised for its inclusive and social justice potential, scholars have cautioned against its uncritical application, particularly in contexts where minoritized languages, such as Catalan, are at risk of being overshadowed by dominant varieties (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; Jaspers, 2018). Recent scholarship has responded to these concerns underscoring the importance of providing spaces for minoritised languages, while developing safe and inclusive spaces for all linguistic practices.

This presentation reports on a translanguaging planned intervention conducted in a Catalan primary school, situated within a broader research project on multilingual education. The study aimed to investigate how such an intervention could support linguistic diversity and sustain minoritized languages, particularly Catalan. The project focused on collaboratively redesigning the classroom's semiotic space, referred to as schoolscape by Brown (2005), to reflect the multilingual realities of the school community in the school. Working with teachers and pupils, the intervention involved co-constructing multilingual signage, displays, and classroom materials that incorporated Catalan, Spanish, English, and students' home languages.

Drawing on nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) as both a conceptual and analytical framework, the study examined how language practices, spatial arrangements, and participants' experiences interacted throughout and after the intervention. This approach enabled an examination of how the redesigned schoolscape mediated shifts in language practices, ideologies, and spatial relations over time. Data were collected through classroom observations, photographs, videos, interviews, and field notes.

Preliminary findings reveal that the redesigned schoolscape enhanced the visibility and legitimacy of students' linguistic repertoires, encouraged flexible language practices, and fostered a greater sense of belonging among learners. Although some expressed resistance to the approach, teachers reported increased awareness of the pedagogical value of linguistic diversity and developed more inclusive classroom practices. At the same time, tensions emerged between the school's official language policy and the everyday multilingual realities of the community.

The study illustrates how redesigning the schoolscape through a translanguaging approach can serve as a powerful pedagogical and ecological strategy for promoting linguistic inclusivity and sustaining minority languages in multilingual educational contexts.

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The Impact of Exposure to Global Englishes Accents on Chinese Children's Learning of EFL (English as A Foreign Language)

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The representation quality hypothesis (Sommers & Barcroft, 2011) suggests acoustic variability facilitates L2 vocabulary acquisition by strengthening lexical representations and storing indexical features (e.g., voice type) to aid lexical retrieval. L2 acoustic variability also helps learners detect invariant cues, promoting generalisation (Brekelmans et al., 2022). 30 years of research show that High-Variability-Phonetic-Training (HVPT) enables L2 phoneme perception/production and lexical learning (e.g., Uchihara et al., 2025). Yet, HVPT research has centred on adult L2 learning and contrasts of high vs. low talker variability, while research on accent variability (structured acoustic differences shaped by talkers' region, group, or ethnicity) remains scarce and mixed, particularly among child L2 learners.

L2 accent variability resonates with Global Englishes (GE) research, which foregrounds language diversity, identity, and multilingualism in pedagogy (de Costa & Rose, 2024). Yet, its impact on linguistic outcomes beyond awareness (such as word recognition) remains underexplored (Miao et al., 2025). Likewise, GE research on young L2 learners is limited, despite its widespread occurrence. Recent developments, such as using GenAI to diversify classroom GE varieties (Lo, 2025), underscore the pedagogical appeal of GE, yet practitioners' concerns persist over whether GE-based variability hinders L2 learning (Fang et al., 2022). Thus, this PhD project examines whether exposure to GE accents helps Chinese children understand and be understood by a wider range of interlocutors.

As part of the project, the present cross-sectional study examines whether exposure to GE accents poses challenges by investigating how young Mandarin-speaking EFL learners recognise familiar words in different accents, perceive accent differences, and express attitudes towards them. Sixty-nine children (Year 1 = 38, aged 6–9; Year 4 = 31, aged 9–12) completed a word-recognition task using four AI-generated, authenticity-checked accents (Received Pronunciation, General American, Mandarin-accented English, and Indian English) and a Berkeley Puppet Interview assessing their attitudes. The results showed comparable accuracy across accents in the Year 1 students but slower processing for Indian English; in Year 4, accuracy for Indian English was slightly lower (86% vs. 91–94%) but with no slower response. Regarding attitudes, Year 4 showed greater accent awareness but more negative views of Mandarin-accented English. Pedagogically, brief exposure to GE accents did not hinder young EFL learners' word recognition, as Year 1 children adapted to accent diversity with minimal cost, and Year 4 showed only slight accuracy differences under unfamiliar accents. Thus, incorporating GE varieties is encouraged, especially to foster older learners' openness to linguistic diversity.

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“So, there's now this controversy going on about whether first graders should see that text” – the role of written language in early foreign language teaching

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Interpreting and producing diverse and multilingual oral, written, visual, and nonverbal messages are all part of the broad concept of multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). In the Finnish curriculum of basic education, multiliteracy is one area of transversal competencies, the development of which is incorporated into all subjects (EDUFI, 2016). According to the curriculum, early foreign language teaching focuses on oral language, and students are not required to have reading and writing skills at the beginning of their studies. Interest in written language is gradually being awakened. (EDUFI, 2020)

Our project investigates language teachers' and learners' perceptions of language and multiliteracies, and how these are reflected in teaching practices in early language learning. In this presentation, I focus on examining teachers' views on the role of written language in early foreign language teaching. Based on previous research (e.g., Hahl et al., 2020), some teachers have concerns about the working methods suitable for early foreign language teaching and that not all students are yet able to read and write. On the other hand, some teachers have stated that written language is not really necessary in early language teaching.

Our data consists of interviews with six teachers. These teachers include language teachers, class teachers, and double-qualified teachers. The data is analyzed using qualitative content analysis methods. Teachers' views on the use of written language varied: written language was both used and avoided. The reasons given were related to student-centeredness, personal teaching experience, and curriculum objectives. Among other things, written language was perceived as capturing students' attention at the expense of pronunciation, but it was also mentioned as a means of differentiation. Some teachers described written language as an integral part of diverse language teaching.

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Exploring the Affordances of Collaborative Activities for Young EFL Learners' Metapragmatic Reflections

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Developing children's ability to communicate meaningfully is a central aim of English as a foreign language (EFL) education (Europarat, 2020). In addition to grammar and vocabulary, early language learning involves helping learners understand how language functions in social interaction. Second language (L2) pragmatic competence, defined as the ability to use and interpret language across social contexts (Taguchi, 2019), is central to communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Szabo, 2018). Within research on young language learners (YLLs), most instructional studies have targeted speech acts such as requests, apologies, and greetings, leaving other socially meaningful acts, like compliments and compliment responses, underexplored (Savić et al., 2025). While previous studies have shown that young learners can engage in metapragmatic reflection, understood as the ability to reflect on and talk about how language choices convey meaning in interaction (Economidou-Kogetsidis et al., 2026; Myrset & Savić, 2021), less is known about the affordances of collaborative classroom activities for supporting such reflection in early EFL instruction.

Grounded in sociocultural theory, this instructional study is part of a larger PhD project exploring the affordances of learner participation and collaborative classroom activities for YLLs' L2 pragmatic competence, with a particular focus on compliments and compliment responses. The study will be conducted with 8-9-year-old learners in Norwegian third-grade EFL classrooms. The instructional unit is designed to create opportunities for reflection and dialogue around language use. Through a series of interactive, whole-class and small-group activities, learners engage with English compliments and compliment responses, with integrated guided reflections that encourage them to verbalize their reasoning about language choices. Data will be collected in early 2026 through metapragmatic task-based interviews and audio-recorded small-group discussions conducted before, during, and after an eight-week instructional period. The qualitative data will be analyzed thematically to identify how collaborative activities support learners in co-constructing metapragmatic understandings of compliments and compliment responses in English.

The conference presentation will focus on the study's first research question: What are the affordances of collaborative activities for prompting metapragmatic reflections? It will outline the design of the instructional unit and present preliminary analyses of learner reflections during selected classroom activities. By focusing on collaborative classroom interaction as a site for metapragmatic reflection, the study aims to contribute empirical and pedagogical insights to the growing field of L2 pragmatics in early EFL education.

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Exploring the Use of Queer Picturebooks in the Primary EFL Classroom

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The PhD project explores the use of queer picturebooks in the primary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, with a focus on learners' responses to narratives portraying diverse family structures. While picturebooks are commonly used in primary education as authentic resources, those centering queer characters or stories remain rare (Smolkin & Young, 2011). The term "queer" encompasses sexual and gender identities that challenge heteronormativity (Kang et al., 2017) and is often included under the LGBTQ+ umbrella terms. This lack of representation reinforces 'the single story of heterosexuality' (Merse, 2018), marginalizing or erasing queer experiences in children's literature (Gray, 2021).

Drawing on Bishop's (1990) mirrors-and-windows metaphor, queer-themed picturebooks allow children from queer families or those who identify as queer to see themselves reflected, while also offering others a window into different realities. Such materials enhance representation, foster empathy, and deepen understanding of diverse identities (Madalena & Ramos, 2022). However, most research on queerness in English Language Education (ELE) has remained theoretical. Merse (2025) highlights the need to examine what happens when learners and teachers actively engage with LGBTQ+ texts. However, this requires that teachers mediate these picturebooks and know how to provide space for children's responses (Mourão, 2016).

The PhD project investigates what happens when young EFL learners engage with such texts in task-based learning contexts. Three picturebooks – *Bathe the Cat* (McGinty & Roberts, 2022), *Mr. Watson's Chickens* (Dapier & Tsurumi, 2021), and *Grandad's Camper* (Woodgate, 2021) – were selected for their incidental portrayal of queer identities. In collaboration with class teachers, task plans were designed following a Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) approach, with creative target tasks centered on the theme of family. This is a relevant and meaningful topic for children; it is familiar enough that they are able to use their linguistic repertoire to complete them, and it can be renegotiated by the learners in terms of language and content to meet their needs (Kolb & Schocker 2021).

The participants are two Grade 5 classes (ages 10–11) in Germany. Data include classroom observations, learners' task outputs, and teacher reflections.

Preliminary findings suggest that queer picturebooks prompt curiosity and empathy, encouraging learners to draw on their linguistic resources while discussing the concept of family and relating them to their own lives. This presentation will discuss the design and implementation of these task plans.

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Exploring How AI Technology and Digital Tool Use Affect Learner Autonomy and English Language Development Among Young Chinese EFL Learners

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This study investigates how artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and digital tools influence learner autonomy and English language development among young Chinese EFL learners aged 6–12 in online learning environments. In the context of globalized education and digital transformation, fostering learner autonomy has become a key objective in second language acquisition. Originally defined by Holec (1981) as the “ability to take charge of one’s own learning,” autonomy has since evolved into a multifaceted construct encompassing affective, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions (Little, 1991; Benson, 2013). While autonomy has been linked to motivation, self-regulation, and long-term language success (Deci & Ryan, 2013), its development in young learners remains complex, as they are still acquiring foundational skills for independent learning.

Second language (L2) development, similarly, is dynamic and nonlinear, shaped by fluctuating internal and contextual factors. Drawing on Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), this study conceptualizes autonomy and language development as co-evolving processes emerging from continuous interaction among learners, digital tools, and learning environments (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Murray & Lamb, 2018; Paiva, 2011; Reinders & White, 2016).

Digital technologies have profoundly transformed language education, integrating adaptive feedback, assessment, and learner support. Recent advances in AI—such as adaptive learning systems, intelligent tutoring, and conversational chatbots—have redefined how learners engage with input and feedback (Azhar & Abdullah, 2024; Godwin-Jones, 2020; Iftikhar, 2025). Although such technologies are increasingly adopted in China’s EFL education (Feng, 2025), limited empirical evidence exists regarding their effects on the development of autonomy and sustained language growth among young learners.

Adopting a longitudinal mixed-methods design, the study will proceed through several sequential phases. A pilot phase involving 24 learners and six teachers will refine research instruments and data collection protocols. The main study will follow approximately 300 online EFL learners over one academic year. Quantitative data will include standardized language proficiency tests (aligned with CEFR levels) and age-appropriate autonomy scales administered at baseline and post-intervention. Qualitative data—digital learning journals, semi-structured interviews, and online classroom observations—will capture learners’ reflections, engagement, and decision-making behaviors. Platform analytics from AI-based tools will provide complementary evidence of learners’ self-directed learning patterns across contexts.

By bridging digital pedagogy, autonomy theory, and language development research, this study seeks to illuminate how AI-mediated learning environments shape the co-development of autonomy and linguistic competence in early foreign language education, informing the design of autonomy-supportive and developmentally appropriate digital learning models for young Chinese EFL learners.

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